

Christian Orient

ISSN 0258 - 1744

September

1997

PROCESSED

JAN 16 1998

GTU LIBRARY



SPIRITUALITY

EDITORIAL

INTEGRATION AND DEIFICATION THROUGH HOLY QURBANA

Rev. Fr. Geo Pallikunnel

TRINITARIAN FOUNDATION OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS AND

SYRO-MALABAR QURBANA

Paulachan Kochappilly CMI

A METHODOLOGY FOR SYRO-MALABAR SACRAMENTOLOGY

Dr. Thomas Poovathanikunnel

BOOK REVIEWS, NEWS

CHRISTIAN ORIENT

An Indian Journal of Eastern Churches for Creative
Theological Thinking

EDITORIAL BOARD

Managing Editor

Dr. Thomas Mannoorampampil

Section Editors

Ecclesiology

Dr. Xavier Koodapuzha

Liturgy

Fr. Lonappan Arangassery

Spirituality

Dr. Varghese Pathikulanga

Ecumenism

Dr. Joseph Kallarangatt

News & Documentation

Dr. Wilson Ukken

SPIRITUALITY

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
Editorial	105
Integration and Deification Through Holy Qurbana	107 <i>Rev. Fr. Geo Pallikunnel C M I</i>
Trinitarian Foundation of Christian Ethics and Syro - Malabar Qurbana	132 <i>Paulachan Kochappilly C M I</i>
A Methodology for Syro - Malabar Sacramentology	156 <i>Dr. Thomas Poovathanikunnel</i>
Book Reviews	167
News	169

September

Vol. XVIII

No. 3

Copyright: Christian Orient Trust, Kottayam 1986.

Manuscripts and Book Reviews are to be sent to the **Managing Editor, Christian Orient Trust, Manganam P. O., Kottayam - 686 018, Kerala, India.**

Annual Subscription: Rs. 45/-; Foreign: \$ 30/- or DM 50 by air mail; \$ 15/- or DM 30 sea mail.

Single Copy: Rs. 15 (in India); \$ 10 or the equivalent (abroad).

Editorial

The Liturgy, especially the Eucharistic celebration is the experiential expression of our Christian existence. The Fathers in Vatican II asserted it conclusively in the following statement:

"...it is the liturgy through which, especially in the divine sacrifice of the Eucharist, the work of our redemption is accomplished, and it is through the liturgy, especially, that the faithful are enabled to express in their lives and manifest to others the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church"(SC 2).

Scholars have tried to explain in various ways this vision of the Church. Recently, they are also trying to propose it in relation to ecology and human conduct. This issue of *Christian Orient* presents to the readers two such articles which explain the Eucharistic celebration of the East Syriac or Chaldeo-Indian heritage.

Rev. Fr. Geo Pallikunnel in his article, *Integration and Deification through Holy Qurbana*, tries to show that the fruits of Holy *Qurbana* are integration into Christ and deification of both the human being and the cosmic reality. He shows it as the final destiny of creation itself. He substantiates it through biblical and patristic evidences. Baptism and the Sacrament of Perfection are the sacramental beginning of the process of integration and deification. Holy *Qurbana* really intensifies this process. The weak and frail nature of our human being and the disintegrated creation are united, integrated and sanctified in the Holy *Qurbana*. He shows that the fulfilment of this process of integration and deification shall be in the eschatological Kingdom.

Rev. Fr. Paulachan Kochappilly in his article, *Trinitarian Foundation of Christian Ethics and Syro-Malabar Qurbana*, shows that the most Blessed Trinity is not only the foundation of Christian ethics but is in fact the source and summit of Christian living. The Sacrament of Baptism introduces one to Christian living while the Holy *Qurbana*, the Eucharistic celebration helps one's growth. Both this initiation and growth take place in relation to the Trinitarian mystery. It is in fact a growth in divinization. In the Eucharistic celebration, the faithful not only glorify the Triune God but submit themselves unconditionally to the Holy Trinity. He concludes saying that the frequent celebration of the *Holy Qurbana* unites the believers with the mystery

of the Trinity and with the members of the community together with everybody in the world and offers them the horizon of Christian vision and action, which establishes meaningfulness and purposefulness of life leading to wholeness and holiness.

The third article in this issue is that of Rev. Dr. Thomas Poovathanikunnel, *A Methodology for Syro-Malabar Sacramentology*. This article presents the theology of symbols in the context of sacramentology. The symbols are shown to be a "presentation" than "representation". Symbols are not just pointers, but are manifestations. They are in fact pieces of revelation which bring the reality nearer to us and not simply a communication which informs us about the reality. In Liturgy the symbols unite God and man or heaven and earth; there the sign and signified become one. The author says that K. Rahner proposes the concept of *Realsymbol* in the West that it may come closer to the Eastern understanding of symbols in Liturgy.

While most sincerely thanking all the three contributors to this issue of *Christian Orient*, may I wish all the readers a very fruitful and pleasant reading of this rich material. Sincere thanks also to all my collaborators in bringing this issue to the public.

Dharmaram College, Bangalore

September 8, 1997

The Nativity of *IshoMatha*.

Varghese Pathikulangara CMI
Editor

Integration and Deification Through Holy Qurbana

Human and cosmic destiny is integration into Christ and participation in God's life and nature. Jesus Christ is the visible sign and prototype of this destiny. The Church, as the sacrament and body of Christ, is moving towards this destiny by integrating her members fully into the body of Christ and celebrating it in the liturgy. Eucharist is the celebration and sacrament of the presence of Christ, who is the *theanthropos*, who integrates humanity and cosmos into him and makes them participate in divine life and nature. This process of integration and deification has a special importance in the background of today's anthropocentric world vision, where human and cosmic dignity is threatened by so many facts such as ecological crisis, wars, forced poverty, etc. Eucharist as the sum and summit of (Christian) life orientates man towards the fullness of life in God.

1. The Concept of Integration and Deification

Between the two terms, integration and deification, the first one is very popular in modern usage. Modern psychology and sociology have a leading role in popularizing this term. In ecclesial circles this term made its appearance

only recently, even though the concept was there from the very beginning of Christianity. The second term 'deification' is a rare term in popular usage. This term came from Greek philosophy and was christianized and popularized by the Greek Christian writers. We can see a growth in the understanding of this concept in Christian circles, especially in the Greek Christian tradition. In the Syriac tradition, especially in the East Syriac tradition, we can also see this concept with a different mode and manner of expression.

a) Integration

The English word 'integration' comes from the Latin *integrare* (means 'to make whole' or 'integrate') and means the action or process of integrating.¹ The words 'integer', 'integral' and 'integrity' are derived from the same root. Integrity and integration are two words used in this study to convey the concepts of 'the state of wholeness' and the 'the process (of integrating) towards this wholeness'.

Integration is the movement towards integrity or wholeness. This wholeness is not a mere lifeless collection of many parts, but an organic unity or a living system. For example, the human

1 *The Oxford English Dictionary*, Vol. VII, Oxford 1989, 1065.

body is an organic unity or an integrated whole. The body loses its organic nature and vitality partially by illness and old age and completely in death. In the first Letter to Corinthians (12:12-27) Paul speaks of the integrity of the 'body of Christ'. This example envisages the integration of the human person (and the whole created universe) in and into Christ. This is the basic Christian vision of integration. Under this concept we can think of a human integration, integration of ecclesial community and integrity of creation in Christ.

b) Deification

It is the English word equivalent to the Greek word *theosis*, literally meaning 'to make godly'. The Cappadocian Father, Gregory Nazianzen, introduced this term for the first time into Christian writings.² He described *theosis* as an ascent to God. In the Syriac tradition, the terms used to convey the concept of deification are *malahanuta* and *metalahanuta*. These words are derived from the noun *alaha* means "God."³ The Syriac word *malahana* means "deifying" or "making divine" or "making to be a partner of the divine nature." *Malahanauta* means "deification" or "divinisation." *Metalahanuta* also has the same meaning with more extensive usage in the Syriac literature.⁴

In different religious traditions and philosophies of the world, we can see this concept in different degrees. In the Eastern Christian tradition, especially for Greek Christians, the word *theosis* expresses the most basic concept of salvation. In very simple terms it is interpreted as 'participation in the very life of God'. It is not mere justification, rather a restoration of the 'natural state' of the human person. John Meyendorff explains that "it is a communion in the risen body of Christ; participation in divine life; sanctification through the energy of God, which penetrates true humanity and restores it to its natural state than justification, or the remission of inherited guilt".⁵ Deification is not pantheism. Greek Christian Fathers distinguish the essence of God and His energies. Deified humanity is united to God only in his energies, not in his essence. Man is called to become god, not by nature but by grace. P. B. T. Bilaniuk gives a comprehensive description of this concept:

Theosis can be described as the omnipotent and sanctifying, divine and Triadic activity [which because of the indwelling of the Trinity and grace and because of the inborn and natural capacity of the creature for transfiguration induces a process of assimilation to God the Father of

2 Cf. P. C. Phan, *Grace and the Human condition* (Message of the Fathers of the Church, No. 15), Wilmington 1988, 171.

3 Cf. J. Payne-Smith, *A compendious Syriac Dictionary*, Oxford 1957, 17.

4 References of this term in some of the Syriac writings, see K. Brockelmann, *Lexicon Syriacum*, Hildesheim 1982, 21.

5 J. Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology*, New York 1974, 156.

the whole human person, of mankind and of the visible and invisible universe in its totality, through the mediation of the incarnate Logos, Christ the Pantocrator, and in the Holy Spirit.⁶

The basic biblical text of this concept is 2 Pet 1:3-4, where the participation in divine nature is portrayed as the highest gift of God. The image of God in man and the incarnation of the Logos reiterated the deifying will of God. In Christ humanity and the whole creation are unified and are moving towards their final destiny, i.e. deification.

Even though the early Syriac Fathers were least influenced by the Greek tradition, we can see the biblical concept of deification and its steady development in their writings. Though the manner and expressions of this concept are different, the basic concept is essentially the same. For example see some lines from a Hymn on Virginity of Ephrem:

Free will succeeded in making Adam's
beauty ugly,

For he, a man, sought to become a
god.

Grace, however, made [beautiful his
deformities
and God came to become a man.

Divinity flew down
to draw humanity up;

For the Son had made beautiful the
deformities of the servant,
and so he has become a god, just
as he desired.⁷

In the writings of later Fathers and theologians of this tradition we can also see the idea of deification.⁸ The anthropology and soteriology of this tradition formed by the Fathers and later theologians adequately express this fact. Sacramental theology, especially the Eucharistic theology, is not an exception to it.

2. Biblical and Theological Foundations

These concepts have their deep rooted biblical and theological foundations.

a) Holiness of God

The words 'Holy' (*kadhosh*) and 'holiness' (*kodhesh*) best reveal the essence and nature of God. Creaturely holiness is derived from the divine by some contact with this "holy".

Holiness lies at the heart of biblical teaching. In the OT, YHWH alone is holy. He is the "Holy one of Israel" and the "thrice Holy" (Is 5:19-24; 6:1-6; 30:11,15; Lev 11:44; Ez 20:41). His holiness cannot be compared to any other or even be approached or touched by

6 P. B. T. Bilaniuk, "The Mystery of Theosis or Divinisation". *OCA* 195 (1973), 338.

7 H. Virginity, 48;15-18, as quoted in S. Brock, *The Luminous Eye*, Rome 1986, 127.

8 Ref. S. Brock, *The Luminous Eye*, 123-128; S. J. Beggiani, *Early Syriac Theology with Special Reference to the Maronite Tradition*, Lanham 1983, 73-77; F. G. McLeod, *The Soteriology of Narsai*, Roma 1973; Ephrem, *Hymns on Paradise*, ET and ed. by S. Brock, Crestwood 1990, 72-74.

any man (Is 40:25; Ex. 3:1-3; Ps 29:1ff). His holiness is manifested through various theophanies like fire, cloud, light, burning coal, etc. (Ex 3:2-3; 13:21-22; Dt 4:12,24; 5:25-26).⁹

The term used in the NT for holiness is *hagios*, which is the term used in the LXX for *kadhosh*. God the Father is holy (Lk 1:49; Rev 4:8;6:10; Jn 17:11); Jesus Christ, the Son of God is holy (Mk 1:24; Lk 4:34; Jn 6:69); the Spirit of God is holy (Rom 1:4);¹⁰ and it is used for Christians also (cf. 1Pet 2:59; 1 Cor 1:30).

In Syriac the word used for the Holy Spirit is *Ruha d' Qudsa* meaning the "Spirit of Holiness". He is the personification of divine holiness¹¹ or the hypostized holiness of God.¹² This Spirit of Holiness is the sanctifier and divinizer par excellence.¹³

Deification is a call to participate in the holiness of god. The whole of the Jewish and Christian understanding of God and his relationship to his people can be summed up in the

following biblical verse: "Be holy, for, I, the Lord, your God, am holy" (Lev 19:2). By participating in God's holiness man become holy and deified. Concretely this happens in the Church through the participation in the Sacraments.

b) Image and Likeness

Man's creation in the 'image and likeness of God' is a strong foundation for his deification. The whole community of creation is made by the Word of God and "God saw that it was good" (Gen. 1:4,12,18,21,25). The creation of humanity at the end in the image of God and likeness was "very good" (Gen.1:31). Image in Gen 1:26 corresponds to the Hebrew term *'selem*, which in the Geek (LXX) is rendered as *eikon*; and likeness to the Hebrew *demuth*, which in Greek *homoios*. Here the author of Genesis defines both the nature of man and the relation between man and God and the distinction between him and other creatures.

Generally in the Greek Christian understanding, man's spiritual faculties

- 9 cf. Procksch, "Hagios", *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. G. Kittel and ET by G. W. Bromily, Michigan 1965, 95.
- 10 The attribute 'Holy' is used for the Holy Spirit about 90 times in the NT.
- 11 Cf. J. Poovannikunnel, *The Concept of 'Mystery' (Raza) in the Syro - Malabar Qurbana*, Kottayam 1989, 181.
- 12 P. B. T. Bilaniuk, *Theology and Economy of the Holy Spirit. An Eastern Approach*, Bangalore 1980, 177.
- 13 Eastern Fathers generally linked the divinity of the Holy Spirit with his work of deification. For example Gregory Nazianzen says: "If the Spirit is of the same order or creation as myself how can he deify me or join me to the Godhead... If the Holy Spirit is not God, let him first be deified and then let him deify me his equal." *Oration 34*, 4, 12: *The Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers* (hereafter cited as *NPNF*), (Series 2), VII, ET by C. G. Brown and J. E. Swallow, Michigan 1964, 337.

are considered as the image of God.¹⁴ The Latin West also followed this thought pattern.¹⁵ In the Syriac tradition, we can see different ways of thinking. For example, the great poet theologian and Father of the Church St. Ephrem sees the 'image of God' not in the whole human being but in his spiritual element.¹⁶ On the other hand Narsai understands image as pertaining to the whole man. He says: "In the beginning when He [the Creator] fashioned our nature, He called it His image.... The Creator willed to call it [the soul] and the body His image."¹⁷ His teaching of man as God's image is closely related to that of man as the unifying bond of the universe, who joins spiritual or angelic and purely sensible nature in man.¹⁸ Contemporary theology generally accepts the whole man as the image of God.¹⁹

Some Greek Fathers distinguish between the 'image' and 'likeness' in man. Here the image is like a seed whose

goal is to become 'like' God as possible. The ascension from the 'image' to the 'likeness' will be completed in the bodily resurrection of the human being.²⁰

The sin of the human disintegrated his personality and obscured the 'image of God' in him. According to Narsai, 'the beautiful colours of his soul faded because of (his) eating of it.'²¹ Sin, by introducing death into human nature, weakened the union of Spirit and matter, first of all and directly in himself and his descendants and secondly and indirectly in all creation.²² Jesus Christ is the perfect image of God (cf. 2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15) and can be considered as the archetype of man. The blurred image in man is fully restored in Christ, the 'true image of God'. According to Ephrem, because "of his love He came down to renew the image of Adam grown old."²³ For Narsai, Jesus through the Spirit renewed the image:

14 For example Clement of Alexandria consider the rational soul as 'image'. Cf. *Exhortation to the Heathen*, 10.

15 Cf. Thomas Aquinas *Summa, Theologiae*, Ia. 93.2.

16 S. J. Beggiani, *Early Syriac Theology*, 15-16.

17 *Homily* 66 as quoted in F. G. McLeod, *The Soteriology of Narsai*, 19.

18 Cf. F. G. McLeod, "Man as the Image of God: Its meaning and theological significance in Narsai", *Theological Studies*, 42 (1981), 462.

19 Cf. P. E. Hughes, *The True Image: The Origin and Destiny of Man in Christ* Michigan 1989, 3-23.

20 T. Spidilik *The Spirituality of the Christian East*, Kalamazoo 1986, 58.

21 *A Homily on the Epiphany of Our Lord*, lines 27-28: *Narsai's Metrical Homilies on the Nativity, Epiphany, Passion, Resurrection and Ascension: Critical Edition of the Syriac Text*, ET by F. McLeod, Brepols 1979, 73.

22 See, W. F. Mocomder, "The Theological Synthesis of Cyrus of Edessa an East Syrian Theologian of the Mid-Sixth century" *OCP* 30 (1964), 9-17.

23 *Homily on Nativity*, 109-110: *The Harp of the Spirit: Eighteen Poems of St. Ephrem*, ET by S. Brock London 1983, 66.

In the crucible of the Spirit,

He will mould the image
that iniquity has rendered odious
and imparted the beauty of heavenly
beings to earthly ones.²⁴

The process of renewal and re-integration of the image in Christ is called deification. It happens in the Church through the sacraments.

c) Jesus Christ - The Sacrament of Integration and Deification

The Divine *Logos*, the Word, is the foundation of all creation: "All things were made through him and without him was not anything made that was made" (Jn.1:3). He is the "Second Adam" or the "New Adam" (Rom 5:12; 1 Cor 15:22). It is Adam's body's or 'the body of mortal Adam' that the Word puts on at the incarnation and it is the body of Adam which proves victorious in Christ.²⁵ In the incarnation, the second person of the Trinity, who is one with God in his divine nature becomes one with man in his human nature and both natures are brought together in the unity of his theanthropic person. The most common term used by the Syriac Fathers to describe the incarnation is that Christ "put on the body" or "clothed himself on the body." This is very much related to the understanding that Adam and Eve were originally clothed by the 'robe of glory' or 'light'. Through sin they

lost their 'robe of glory' and are expelled from Paradise. At the incarnation God the Word clothed himself with adam and 'his body' which is 'our body' and our 'humanity' and its weak state, by that He gave back the 'robe of glory' to mankind. Ephrem says:

Christ came to find Adam who had
gone astray,
He came to return him to Eden in
the garment of light.²⁶

Glory to you, who clothed yourself
in the body of mortal Adam
There by making it a fountain of
life (or salvation) to all mortals.²⁷

Christ not only participated in human nature, but also in the whole world of matter. Pope John Paul II emphasizes the cosmic significance of Incarnation in his Apostolic Letter *Dominum et Vivificantem*:

The Incarnation of God the Son signifies the taking up into unity with God not only human nature but in his human nature, in a sense of everything that is flesh.... The Incarnation then, also has a cosmic significance, a cosmic dimension, the first born of creation unites himself, in some way, the entire reality of man, with the whole creation.²⁸

His incarnation is the basis for the deification of man and unification of the

24 A Homily on the Epiphany of Our Lord, 435-436: *Narsais Metrical Homilies*, 97.

25 Ephrem, *Hymns on Crucifixion*, 5:11 as quoted in S. Brock, *The Luminous Eye*, 17.

26 H. Virginity, 16:9 as quoted in S. Brock, *The Luminous Eye*, 67.

27 Discourse on Our Lord, 9 as quoted in S. Brock, *The Luminous Eye*, 68.

28 *Dominum et Vivificantem*, 50: *L'Osservatore Romano*, 9 June, 1986.

cosmos. As Athanasius says, the Son became man "that he might deify us in himself"²⁹. Again he says that "he was made man that we might be made god"³⁰. Deification is impossible without the incarnation of the Son. His Incarnation bridges the gap between God and World and opens the way to deification. Because of the Incarnation, humanity is lifted up into the very life of God.

Transfiguration and resurrection are integral part of deification. Christ's transfiguration on Mount Thabore (Mk 9:1-12) can be considered as a guarantee of human transformation. The transfigured Lord is the archetype of the transfigured and glorified extra-divine reality at the end of time³¹. Through his transfiguration, he prefigured his resurrection and the cosmic transformation at the end, where Christ becomes the head of all creation (Col 1:15-20) and God will be "all in all" (1 Cor 15:28). The bodily resurrection of Jesus, which is at the very heart of Christian faith, is the principle of our own resurrection. He came in order to lead back humanity to the pneumatic incorruptibility by a radical transformation. His resurrection is the prototype of the transformation of man and the cosmos. It became the universal law for creation, human as well all cosmic life systems³². The day of Christ's resurrection is the first day of the new creation,

and he is called as 'the head' of this new community of creation, because 'in him the whole fullness of Godhead dwells bodily' (Col 2:9) and through him this *shekinah* overflows into the new fellowship of creatures, so that we can really talk about a 'deification of the cosmos'.

d) New Creation

If the 'image of God' in man touches directly the sanctification and deification of human being and only distantly the whole cosmos, the vision of 'new creation' affects directly the whole cosmic reality. Belief in the renewal, re-integration and deification of the whole cosmos is part of Christian faith.

Originally creation was in full integrity. But sin disintegrates not only the human nature but becomes the cause of all cosmic disorder. Humankind is estranged from the mother earth and from each other³³. From that time 'New Creation' is a vision of the Bible. The flood story and God's covenant with the whole creation is a symbolic act of God for a new creation. Harmony and peace (*shalom*) together became the hallmark of the vision of new creation in the OT. Prophetic vision of a new order (Is 11:6-9) is a fine example of the vision of New Creation.

29 Letter 60:3-4: *NPNF* (series 2), IV, ET by A. Robertson, 575-76.

30 *On the Incarnation*, 54: *NPNF* (series 2), IV, 65.

31 P.B.T. Bilaniuk, "A Theological Meditation on the Mystery of Transfiguration", *Diakonia* 8²(1973), 314.

32 V. Lossky, *Orthodox Theology: An Introduction*, New York 1978, 118.

33 J. Pathrapankal, "The Bible and Human Activity on Mother Earth", *Journal of Dharma*, XVIII (1993), 11-13.

Jesus Christ embodies most vividly the new creation expressed in the OT. He is the Word eternally alive and the vital force through which God is creating the universe, and he becomes the first born of the New Creation (Col 1:15). The Kingdom of God is the order of New Creation. Many think that the transformation of nature takes place in and through human beings. Bede Griffiths says: "In every human being matter is being transformed daily into spirit... In the body of Christ we can see the transformation of matter by spirit taking place, which is the destiny of us all at the end of time"³⁴. Here the Spirit of resurrection who acts in Christ, and through him in beings is also the Spirit who brings all living creatures into the springtime of eternal life³⁵. According to St. Paul, all things, i. e. the whole created universe is waiting for integration and transformation (Rom 8:19-23). With humankind, the whole creation is waiting for the glorification, with 'groaning and travailing', because through sin, the whole creation becomes the realm of disintegrality with humankind. Eastern Christian theology generally shares this vision with Paul. For example Ephrem writes:

In the world there is struggle,
 in Eden, a crown of glory,
 at our resurrection
 both earth and heaven will
 God renew
 liberating all creatures
 granting them paschal joy, along
 with us.

Upon our mother earth, along with us,
 did He lay disgrace
 when He placed on her, with the
 sinner, the curse,
 so, together with the just, will
 He bless her too;
 this nursing mother, along with her
 children,
 shall He who is good renew.³⁶

At the end God will renew both the humanity and this mother earth, by that the creation and children of God together share in the Kingdom of glory.

Creation of a new heaven and earth is not a thing that solely happens at the parousia. It is happening here and now. Christ is the first-born of this new creation. His resurrection is the new beginning. His Spirit-filled body is the guarantee. Sacraments, especially the Eucharist, are the celebration of this new creation. The Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of transformation, is also the Spirit of creation and re-creation.

3. Sacraments of Initiation and Participation in God's Life

In the Christian vision integration and deification of humankind and the cosmic reality happen in and through the Church, which is the body of Christ. God transmitted his life through his 'beloved Son Jesus Christ' and 'life in Christ' in the concrete form is a matter of fellowship in the body of Christ (1Cor 12:27), both in the Eucharist and in the Church. By the power of the

34 B. Griffiths, *Return to the Centre*, Illinois 1976, 138.

35 J. Moltmann, *The Way of Jesus Christ: Christology in Messianic Dimensions*, London 1990, 253.

36 H. Paradise 9:1: Ephrem, *Hymns on Paradise*, 136.

Holy Spirit, a person is sacramentally integrated into the 'body of Christ' and participates in the 'life of God'. The life in Christ and the complete transformation of our being in the Holy Spirit are realized by sacramental participation of the Church, beginning with the purification through the waters of Baptism, and by that we are formed in the likeness of Christ. Again, by sharing in the body of the Lord by the breaking of the Eucharist, we are taken up into communion with him and with one another. So, the Sacraments of Initiation-Baptism, Sacrament of Perfection and Eucharist—has a special place in the process of deification and participation in God's life.

a) Baptism

The Baptismal liturgy developed in the Syro Malabar tradition (which is part of the East Syriac tradition) has its own special traits and structural particularities. In its original form it had a pre-baptismal anointing followed by the baptismal immersion proper. There was no post-baptismal anointing in the Initiation ceremony. But later it was added³⁷, but practiced discriminately.

In Baptism, we receive the Holy Spirit. This Spirit becomes a 'robe' for the newly baptized.³⁸ Baptism also incorporates the person into the body of Christ, i. e. the Church, and makes him participate in Christ's death and resurrection (cf. Rom 6 : 5-6). Christ integrated the whole created reality in himself and transformed it through his death and resurrection in a sacramental way. In Baptism, by participating in this Paschal Mystery, a person is integrated into Christ and deified. Syriac Fathers use symbolic language to depict this process. In Paradise human being was in perfect harmony with God, nature and himself.³⁹ But sin destabilizes the harmony and integration. Sin disfigured the 'image of God' in them, and they lost the 'robe of glory', which was their original clothing.⁴⁰ Christ, the second Adam and the true image of God reintegrated the fallen nature of man. "It is the same image that tarnished with the filth of iniquity because of Adam's desire for fruit, is molded by the Spirit in the crucible of baptism"⁴¹. By restoring 'the image' and 'reclimbing by the robe of glory' one enters into the new Paradise, i.e. the Church.

37 Catholicos Isho'yahb III (649-59) in the 7th century revised the baptismal liturgy in the pattern of Eucharistic Liturgy and introduced a post-baptismal anointing.

38 Cf. Ephrem, *H. Epiphany*, 12:1.

39 Cf. F. G. McLeod, *The Soteriology of Narsai*, 13.

40 Cf. Narsai, *A Homily on the Epiphany of Our Lord*, lines 1-6; Ephrem, *Commentry on Genesis*, II:14; S. Brock, *Hymns on Paradise*, 206.

41 Narsai, *Homily on the Epiphany of our Lord*, lines 367-68: *Narsai's Metrical Homilies*, 93.

Deification is nothing but a sharing in the life of the Trinity, experiencing the ceaseless pulsing of divine love as it moves endlessly from the Father to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. Baptism is a Trinitarian act, a gift of the Father, by the Son, made effective by the Holy Spirit. The baptized, like Christ in the Jordan, is anointed by the Holy Spirit, begins to live a trinitarian life. Through Baptism we also participate in the Baptism, life, passion, death and resurrection of our Lord in a sacramental way. Death appeared in the world scenario following the sin of Adam. It shattered human nature and put it under the slavery of corruption. Through life, death and resurrection, Christ gained victory over corruption and death. Participating in His death and resurrection through baptism, he recasted our mortal and corruptible nature and raised it up to a new, spiritual and imperishable state⁴². According to Theodore of Mopsuestia, we receive a 'garment of immortality' in Baptism. In Baptism⁴³ we not only participate in the death and resurrection of Christ (Rom 6:5-6), but are 'putting on Christ' (Rom 13:14; Gal 3:27). According to Jean Carbon, 'in our baptism we 'put on Christ' in order that this putting on might become the very substance of

our life. The beloved Son has united us to Himself in his body and the more we make our humanity like his own, the more he causes us to share in his divinity'⁴⁴. This is exactly the *Christosis* and *theosis*.

Sacrament of Perfection

In the East Syriac tradition the second sacrament is known as the 'Sacrament of Perfection' (*Quddasad' Sumlaya*)⁴⁵. This sacrament perfects the grace given in the Sacrament of Baptism. So it is very much related to Baptism and is not celebrated separately. In the East Syriac tradition this Sacrament consists of an imposition of hands and signing, crowning and a final blessing. Prayers at the time of imposition of hands and crowning reveals the nature of this sacrament which is the completion or perfection of Baptism and Christian life.

God's perfection is the norm of Christian perfection: "Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt 5:48). Christian life is a call to the fullness of God's perfection. God's life is poured on a person through the Sacrament of Baptism and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in us, so that a Christian lives

42 P. Nellas, *Deification in Christ: The Nature of the Human Person*, New York, 1987, 113.

43 Cf. *Baptismal Homily*, III, 8: E. Yarnold, *The Awe Inspiring Rites of Initiation: Baptismal Homilies of the Fourth Century*; Slough 1971, 194.

44 J. Carbon, *The Well Spring of Worship*, Manah 1988, 152.

45 The Syriac word *sumlaya* is from the verb '*m/la*' which has several meanings such as 'to complete', 'to conclude', 'to be full', etc. The noun form *sumlaya* is generally used in Syriac OT to express perfection and completion. Cf. R. Payne-Smith, *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 566.

his life of faith in its fullness and may be deified. The Sacrament of Perfection is a sign and pledge of this Christian perfection. This process of deification completes only in the eschatological life.

Receiving the Eucharist is the culmination of these Sacraments, given in immediate succession in all Eastern Churches⁴⁶. Commentaries of Baptismal services always included the communion of the newly baptized, whether they were adults or children. Justin, Hippolitus, Ephraim, Ephrem, John Chrysostom, Cyril of Jerusalem, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Narsai, etc. were witnesses to this tradition of the early Church. They particularly stress the profound bond between baptism and Eucharist, a bond so strong that the newly baptized are in haste to take part in the Eucharist. As Narsai says, "it is the spiritual food of the new born"⁴⁷. Ephrem also mentions the same idea:

Once this womb has given birth,
the altar suckles and nurtures
them,

her children eat straight away,
not milk, but perfect bread⁴⁸.

The bond between Baptism and Eucharist consists in the unity of the Paschal Mystery.

4. Eucharist and Integration

The process of integration started in the Sacraments of Baptism and Perfection is further deepened in the Holy Eucharist. Integrity is the hallmark of creation in its purity, where the human being was in perfect *shalom* with himself and other realities. Paradise, as we have seen already, was the symbol of this integrity. But sin sowed disintegrity in the state of *shalom* and man lost the paradise home. From that time onwards (re) integration was a dream for the future. Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of this dream, who, in himself, (re) integrated the whole created reality including space and time. The Sacraments of Baptism and Perfection initiate a Christian to integrate his life in Christ. But this integration is not a once and for all event, but an ongoing process. Every Christian needs an ongoing integration of life in different realms - personal, interpersonal and cosmic. The Eucharist is the supreme act of this integration in Christ.

a) Human Integration

Human nature is basically good, even though sin disintegrated it. The weakened nature of man is a recurring theme of the Syro-Malabar Holy *Qurbana*. The awareness of the littleness of his

46 May be the only exception is the (latinized) Syro-Malabar Church. where these sacraments are administered separately. But recently the Syro Malabar Major Archbishop Synod decided to administer the first two sacraments together, but it has not been implemented yet.

47 R. H. Connolly, *The Liturgical Homilies of Narsai*, Cambridge 1909, 52-54.

48 H. Virginitz 7.8: S. Brock, *The Harp of the Spirit*, 50.

weak nature⁴⁹ makes him stand before God with a humble heart. Biblical revelation of man as a 'living soul' enables us to see him as a substantial unity without duality. He is a being, at one and the same time both corporal and spiritual, with body and soul. He is simply one, not a collection of smaller units that are more than the person⁵⁰. Syro-Malabar Holy *Qurbana* with the same vision does not use dual language of 'body' or 'soul', one without the other. Sin and defects are part of his weak nature, but constant repentance in the Holy *Qurbana* makes him overcome the disintegrating powers of sin and evil and become integrated in Christ in the hope of resurrection by strengthening his 'weak', 'fragile', 'low', 'fallen' and 'sinful' nature. By partaking in the 'holy' and 'immortal food' he also becomes "immortal and imperishable in hope" and "he leads us to share in the blessings that are to come... and so become by nature completely free from death, corruption and change"⁵¹. Here the whole of his nature mingles with Christ's nature⁵² and the person becomes a son/daughter of God and calls God 'abba' Father. The Eucharist not only integrates and unifies the human person, but also hu-

mankind as a whole. By His incarnation, Jesus integrated humanity into his divinity. The Eucharist is the sacrament of this integration.

The Eucharist makes the Church and it is the true manifestation of the Church. The Church is the body of Christ. In Baptism one is integrated into this body (cf. 1Cor 12:13). The Eucharist renews, strengthens and deepens this integration into the Church already achieved in Baptism⁵³. It is effected by the participation in the Divine Mysteries. Theodore of Mopsuestia says: "By communion in the blessed mysteries, we shall be united among ourselves and joined to Christ our Lord, whose body we believe ourselves to be, and through whom we become partakers of the divine nature"⁵⁴. In the Incarnation, Christ 'put on the body' and that same body has been given in the form of the sacramental body, that is the Eucharist as the life-giving source and integrating principle to his (Mystical) Body⁵⁵. In the Syriac understanding, Paradise is the symbol of the Church. Entry into the Church is re-entry into Paradise, which means re-integration into the primordial harmony. It also signifies the

49 Cf. *Order for the Solemn Raza of the Syro Malabar Church*, Trivandrum 1986 (Hereafter cited as RAZA), 31.

50 Cf. B. M. Ashley, *Theologies of the Body*, Massachusetts 1985, 278.

51 Theodore of Mopsuestia, Baptismal Homily, V, 25: E. Yarnold, *The Awe Inspiring Rites*, 254; Cf. also 246, 252.

52 Cf. Ephrem, *H. Virginity*; 37, 2,3.

53 Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Bangalore 1995, 271.

54 *Baptismal Homily* V, 13: E. Yarnold, *The Awe Inspiring Rites*, 247.

55 Cf. S. Kanjiramakalel, "Church and Eucharist in St. Ephrem" *Christian Orient*, VIII (1987), 113.

eschatalogical Paradise. In the paradise, Christ himself becomes the 'Tree of Life', from which 'the fruit', i. e. the Eucharistic fruit is plucked daily⁵⁶.

b) Cosmic Integration

The Eucharist is not only the unifying principle of human nature, human kind and Church as Mystical Body, but also of the cosmos. Christ, through his incarnation, integrated the whole cosmic reality in his person. Through his resurrection he became the cosmic Christ, integrating also the space-time concept in him. The Eucharist is the Sacrament of this Christ, which integrates in it the whole cosmic order.

The Eucharist is the new Pasch and celebration of the new creation and eternal springtime inaugurated by the incarnation, life, death and resurrection of Christ⁵⁷. Here the integrated community of creation offers praise and thanks to the Creator. As a microcosm⁵⁸, the human being stands at the centre of the cosmic reality by offering and praising for the whole creation⁵⁹.

The second *g'hanta* prayer of the Syro-Malabar *Qurbana* is a meditation on the relationship between God and man as Creator and creature, and it begins with an expression of gratitude for creation: "Worthy of praise from every mouth; of confession from every tongue and worship and exultation from every creature is the adorable and glorious name...."⁶⁰ Peace and harmony are the primordial state and eschatological state of creation. In the first *Karozutha* of the Holy *Qurbana* the deacon prays "for the peace, harmony, stability"⁶¹ and "the prosperity of the whole world"⁶². In the second part of the *Onitha d' Raze* the community "prays that there may be peace in the universe"⁶³. In the Eucharist not only do we pray for the harmony of the universe, but creation is re-structured and (re)integrated sacramentally. The Eucharistic assembly is the reconstitution of the ancient home of man in Paradise. Gathered from different stages and stratas of life, this community becomes a 'microcosm', which represents the whole body of creation. As a sacrifice and offering it creates once more the relationship that man had

56 Cf. Ephrem, *H. Paradise* 6,8: *H. Unleavened Bread* 17,9.

57 Cf. T. Elavanal, *The Memorial Celebration: A Theological Study of the Anaphora of the Apostles Mar Addai and Mari*, Kottayam 1989, 92.

58 The human being is the centre of God's creation. He combined in him the whole creation meaning not only the natural world which is fully integrated with the human being and the whole of creation, but he is also a miniature of the universe-microcosm. Cf. Gregory of Nyssa, *On the Inscription of the Psalms* 1:3.

59 Cf. *Early Christian Mystics*, ET by A. Mingana, Cambridge 1934, 8.

60 RAZA, 45.

61 *Ibid.*, 26.

62 *Ibid.*, 27.

63 *Ibid.*, 36.

with creation before the fall and at the same time completes and perfects it⁶⁴. It is also the model for the cosmic community where love, equality and peace reigns. The Eucharistic elements which are part of this earth are another symbol of real cosmic integration. The material creation found its true meaning in Eucharist, and it became a cosmic symbol of unity and integration. This material creation has its own inner meaning, beauty and value. So, Teilhard de Chardin calls it the 'blessed matter'⁶⁵. He developed a Eucharistic cosmology where evolution is identical with the eucharistization of the universe and the transformation of the cosmos into the body of Christ⁶⁶. Thus the Eucharist constitutes a promise of universal integration and transformation.

c) Integration of Space and Time

Space and time are part of the cosmic order. The first parents were in sacred time and space in the Paradise. Through sin they were thrown out of Paradise and fell into the ordinary space and historical time⁶⁷. In the eschatological Paradise, there should be a reversal of this situation. Now we are in an interim period. Christ, through his

incarnation, life, death and resurrection, (re)opened the gates of Paradise and made us enter into the sacred space and time. As the celebration and commemoration of the Christ event, the reorganization of space and time is realized in the Divine Liturgy.

There is always a tension between present time and eschatological time, or now and eternity in Christian thinking. The Church is in the process of transformation from 'human time' to 'God's time'⁶⁸. Divine Liturgy tries to overcome this tension by integrating 'now' in the 'eternal now' of God's reign saying 'now, always and forever'. Christ unites the past, present and future in his person⁶⁹. As *anamnesis* of the Christ event the Eucharistic Liturgy is a unifying sacrament of the past, present and future dimensions of sacred salvation history. It manifests eternity and activates it in the midst of everyday life⁷⁰. The Sunday celebration is another point of integration, where the idea of sabbath, first day of creation and eighth day⁷¹ are united.

Liturgical space integrates both sacred and geographical space. Easterners consider their liturgy as a foretaste

64 P. Nellas, *Deification in Christ*, 129.

65 T. Chardin, *Hymn of the Universe*, New York 1961, 68-71.

66 Cf. E. Benz, *Evolution and Christian Hope*, New York 1968, 225.

67 S. Brock, *The Luminous Eye*, 18.

68 Cf. J. Ratzinger, *Feast of Faith*, San Francisco 1986, 143.

69 Cf. J. Pathrapankal, "Time and Eternity in Biblical Thought", *Journal of Dharma*, 1 (1976), 331-334.

70 Cf. P. Nellas, *Deification in Christ*, 124.

71 Eighth day is the figure of eternity, life-everlasting and complete rest in God. It is a day with succession.

of the heavenly liturgy. When the priest asks the people 'to lift up their hearts', they in some way are transferred to heaven. In the liturgy, heaven lowers and embraces the earth or the earth rises up and mingles with heaven. They converge and are integrated in a single space. The structure of the church building and its symbolism of this tradition very well reminds us of this. Every church of this tradition must have at least three essential parts: sanctuary (*madbaha*) which is the symbol of heaven; *Questroma* (chancel) which symbolizes the visible heaven and the Paradise; and *Haikla* (nave) which symbolize the earth/terrestrial world.⁷² The Sanctuary is separated by a veil from the other parts of the church, which reminds us of the real nature of heaven. The altar, the focal point of the sanctuary, is the figure of the person of *Christ* (anointed), the sepulchre of the Lord and the throne of God, which transcends the earthly limits of space in the Liturgy. The *bema* (Dais) is a raised platform in the middle of the *Haikla* which symbolizes the earthly Jerusalem and the table on it, Calvary.⁷³

Praying eastward is another cosmic symbolism which unifies the whole concept of space and time. It is an ancient custom of Christianity and the churches

of Thomas Christians were made on the eastward direction – the sanctuary on the eastern side. According to Cyril of Jerusalem, the west is the quarter from which darkness appears and when we turn from west to east, the region of light, this symbolizes the change of allegiance.⁷⁴ The idea of facing the east is not only related to Christ, but also to Paradise, which God planted in Eden towards east.⁷⁵ On the eastern wall of the church there is an image of the glorious cross. In the Syro Malabar Church we used the St. Thomas Cross for this purpose. The purpose of the cross is to indicate the eastern side.⁷⁶ This cosmic symbolism which is drawn into the Eucharistic celebration, according to J. Ratzinger, has considerable importance.

For the true location and the true context of the eucharistic celebration is the whole cosmos. "Facing east" makes this cosmic dimension of the Eucharist present through liturgical gesture. Because of the rising sun, the east-*oriens*-was naturally both a symbol of the resurrection (and to that extent it was not merely a Christological statement but also a reminder of the Father's power and the influence of the Holy Spirit) and a presentation of the hope of the parousia.⁷⁷

72 Cf. George of Arbela, *Exposition of the Ecclesiastical Offices*, ET by R. H. Connolly (translation in manuscript form, Downside Abbey, England), iii-v.

73 Cf. V. Pathikulangara, *Church and Celebration*, Kottayam 1986, 23; George of Arbela, *Exposition*, iv-v.

74 Cf. *Sermon* 1:9: E. Yarnold, *The Awe Inspiring Rites*, 73.

75 Cf. Basil, *On the Holy Spirit*, 27.

76 J. Danielou, *The Theology of Jewish Christianity*, ET by J. A. Baker London 1964, 268-69.

77 J. Ratzinger, *Feast of Faith*, 140.

In this anthropocentric world, celebrating Eucharist eastward helps us to revive a mature cosmotheandric vision and spirituality.

Christ is the source of all peace and integrity. In the Holy Qurbana we become one with the risen Lord who is the peace of the universe through his reconciliatory self sacrifice. By integrating the whole cosmic order, the Eucharist envisages the peace and integrity of the whole creation and 'rest' in God. At the end, as Paul says, "God will be all in all".

5. The Mystery of Salvation and Its Celebration in the Holy Qurbana

Christ through his incarnation, life, passion, death and resurrection, makes the human being participate in the very life and nature of God. In the Eucharist we 're-member' and celebrate this paschal mystery and participate in it sacramentally. Eucharist is the *anamnesis* (memorial representation) of the paschal mystery. The Greek word *anamnesis* is the equivalent of the Hebrew word *zikkaron*⁷⁸. This word is not merely a concept of remembrance or a record of the past, but rather a sign of an objective reality made present here and now.⁷⁹ The early Church considered the 'breaking of the bread' as the memorial of Christ's passion and death. So today in the Eucharist we 're-member' the great saving acts of God accomplished in Christ

and make them our own. The ultimate goal of God's saving act is the deification of human nature in Christ.

The principal moments of salvation history accomplished in Christ, according to Varghese Pathikulangara, are the Nativity-Epiphany, the Resurrection, the Pentecost, the Transfiguration, the Exultation of the Cross and the Parousia⁸⁰. In every liturgical action, especially in the celebration of the Holy *Qurbana* we remember and celebrate these mysteries. By the *anamnesis* every member of the mystical body passes through the process which Christ's humanity underwent: purification and sanctification (Incarnation-Epiphany), transformation, glorification and deification/pneumatization (resurrection/parousia). Even though we cannot differentiate and demonstrate each stage clearly, the Divine Liturgy celebrates these mysteries extensively. By participating in it, our nature can also pass through these stages and be deified. Fathers of the Church and commentators of Holy *Qurbana* were very much aware of this fact and dealt it widely in their writings.

a) *Enarxis*

"Your commandment" and "the commandment of Christ" in the beginning of the Holy *Qurbana* introduces us to the anamnestic character of the Eucharist. This command of Christ (Lk 22:19; 1Cor 11:24-25) is the basis of all Eucharistic

78 The root of this word is *zakar* means 'to hold in memory'.

79 L. Bouyer, *Eucharist: Theology and Spirituality of Eucharistic Prayer*, Notre Dame 1968, 84, 104.

80 Cf. V. Pathikulangara, *Chaldeo-Indian Liturgy I Introduction*, Kottayam 1982, 61-74; *Liturgy Experience*, Kottayam 1995, 121-125.

celebration. The angel's hymn (Lk 2:14) reminds the Eucharistic community of their relation to the Christ event, especially of the Incarnation. His incarnation is the tangible destination of our deification. As Ephrem says,

The first born put on real limbs
and was mingled in with humanity,
He gave what belongs to Him
and took what belongs to us,
so that His mingling
might give life to our mortal state.⁸¹

The Lord's prayer with its *qanona* is a typical response to this revelation of God in Christ. The psalmody represents the whole OT background of the Christ event and the *Onitha d' Qanke* and the Resurrection hymn introduces the cross and glory of Christ and human longing for the participation in that Paschal mystery.

b) Liturgy of the Word

The *Trisagion* at the beginning of the Liturgy of the Word, according to Gabriel Qatraya, "is the praise and glorification of the divine nature, one in its essence and three in its person. It proclaims the immutability of the divine nature and the distinction among the persons of the Holy Trinity, and the indivisible unity of the Transcendent

Being".⁸² The OT Readings following the Trisagion represent the first phase of the Divine Dispensation which is in the order of the preparation and of symbol.⁸³ The Reading of the 'Apostle' represents the special phase of the Mystery of Christ experienced by the Apostle and his proclamation of that Good News.⁸⁴ In the Holy *Qurbana* the Gospel represents Christ, who is the "light of the World and life of all". The Gospel procession and its reading represents the solemn manifestation of the 'Word made flesh'.⁸⁵ By commemorating and celebrating the living and life giving Word, one is slowly transformed into the deified human nature of the 'Word made flesh'.

c) The Pre-Anaphora

The transfer of the gifts from the *betgazzas* to the altar symbolizes our Lord's journey to Gagulta and his body being carried to the sepulchre. Narsai says:

In that hour....on the paten and in the cup He goes forth with the deacon to suffer...The altar is a symbol of our Lord's tomb, without doubt and the bread and wine are the body of our Lord which was embalmed and buried. The veil also which is over them presents a type of the stone sealed with the ring of the priests and the executioners.⁸⁶

81 *H. Against Heresies*, 32, as quoted in S. Brock, *The Luminous Eye*, 131.

82 *Qataronsis Interpretatio*, fol. 26r, as quoted in P. Yousif, "The Divine Liturgy", in *The Eucharistic Liturgy in the Christian East*, ed. J. Madey, Kottayam 1982, 203.

83 P. Yousif; "The Divine Liturgy", 204.

84 J. Vellian and V. Pathikulangara, "The Eucharistic Liturgy of the Chaldeo-Indian Church" in *The Eucharistic Liturgy in the Christian East*, ed. J. Madey, 268.

85 Cf. V. Pathikulangara, *Nammude Qurbana*, Kottayam 1986, 64.

86 Cf. E. Yarnold, *The Awe Inspiring Rites* 227; R.H. Connolly, *Liturgical Homilies*, 3-4.

d) *Anaphora*

The *Anaphora* is the central part of the Holy *Qurbana*, where the community commemorates and celebrates the central events of the mystery of salvation. It is the *anamnesis* of Christ's passion, death, burial and resurrection. The four *g'hanta* prayers are prayers of thanksgiving for the creative, redemptive and sanctifying acts of God in the history of mankind. The Institution Narrative which comes in the middle of the third *g'hanta* represents the passion and death of our Lord.⁸⁷ In the *Epiclesis*, which comes at the end of the fourth *g'hanta*, the Holy Spirit comes down on the offering and changes it to the pneumatic body and Blood of Christ. This signifies the resurrection of our Lord in the Holy *Qurbana*.⁸⁸ On the *Epiclesis*, Theodore of Mopsuestia says: "But by virtue of the sacramental actions, this is the moment appointed for Christ our Lord to rise from the dead and pour out his grace upon us all".⁸⁹ By commemorating and celebrating the awesome mysteries in the Holy *Qurbana* the community participates in the death and resurrection of Our Lord and is sanctified and deified by the power of the Holy Spirit.

e) Rites of Reconciliation and Communion

The Rite of Reconciliation is the response of the community in which

they purify themselves in order to appropriate the fruits of the Paschal Mystery. The communion service is the culmination of the whole celebration of the Mystery of salvation. By receiving the Body and Blood of Christ, one unites oneself with the glorified and pneumatic body of Christ and becomes sanctified and deified by it. According to Gabriel Qatraya, our participation in the Holy Mysteries is the symbol of our participation with Him in the Kingdom of heaven.⁹⁰ Because salvation history tends to the eschatological fulfillment in the Parousia, our deification is also incomplete and partial in this earthly Liturgy. It is completed and fulfilled only in the heavenly liturgy. Eucharist is the connecting link between the Last Supper and the eschatological banquet of the Kingdom.⁹¹

6. Human Ascent to the Holy Presence and Deification through Holy *Qurbana*

God the 'Holy' is the unifying power of the whole created universe. This 'Holy' is immanent in (t)his creation, at the same time as it transcends it. The misuse of freedom by the created human being disintegrated the holiness in the human being and the created universe and increased the tension between the immanence and transcendence of God

87 Cf. V. Pathikulangara, *Nammude Qurbana*, Kottayam 1986, 137-139.

88 R. H. Connolly, *Liturgical Homilies*, 20; E. Yarnold, *The Awe Inspiring Rites*, 246.

89 *Baptismal Homily* V, 11; E. Yarnold, *The Awe Inspiring Rites*, 245.

90 Cf. G. Vavanikunnel (ed.), *Homilies and Interpretations on the Holy Qurbana*, Changanacherry 1977, 93.

91 Cf. T. Elavanal, *The Memorial Celebration*, 180.

in the created reality. In Christ, who is God and man (*theanthropos*), we see the perfect harmony of this immanence and transcendence of holiness of God. The whole economy of salvation is for the greater awareness of God's holiness in the human being and the created universe and to draw them to the holy God. God, the 'Holy one', in Christ made, men partakers in his divinity through his glorious, holy, life-giving and divine mysteries.

The 'weak' and 'frail' nature of human beings is incapable of ascending to God by themselves. So, God in his kindness takes the initiative to be approached by humankind and draws them to stay in the 'holy presence'. This staying with the people culminated in the incarnation, when God becomes historically *Amman - hu-El*, God with us and one of us. The ascent of man and the descent of God coincide or submerge in the person of Jesus Christ. In the God-man Jesus, the earth and heaven come into unity. Eucharist as the sacrament of Christ's presence, unites the ascent of man and the descent of God sacramentally. In the Eucharist, Christ becomes the food for humankind to make them participate in his fire of divinity. By participating in the fire and spirit of the Bread and cup, in a hidden manner, they might be of fire

and Spirit.⁹² Human longing for immortality is also satisfied by this food, because he is the living bread come down from heaven. Any one who eats this bread will live for ever (cf. J, 6:45-51). By eating this heavenly food, human ascent is hastened and divine descent is fulfilled.

a) Awareness of God's Holiness and the Unworthiness of Man

God is "Holy" and it is the eternal praise of God by the angels in heaven (cf. Is 6:3; Rev 4:8). "Holy" is also the hymn and the word of the Church as it enters heaven and stand before the heavenly glory of God. Joining with the heavenly hosts and the heavenly church and as the foretaste of the heavenly liturgy, the earthly Church sings "Holy, Holy, Holy" repeatedly in her liturgy. The *qanona* of the Lord's prayer at the beginning and end of the Holy *Qurbana*,⁹³ *Trisagion*, *Sanctus*, the acclamation "One alone is holy....",⁹⁴ etc. are examples of this basic awareness. By singing "Holy" we acknowledge the nature of God as it is, because "Holy" is his divine nature.⁹⁵ By participating in the Holy Communion one partake in the very nature of God, i.e. Holiness.

In the presence of the holiness of God, man realizes his unworthiness. So he asks: "Lord, who shall dwell in your

92 Cf. Ephrem, *Hymns on Faith* 10:8-9, 17.

93 RAZA, 6-7.

94 RAZA, 60.

95 Cf. *Onitha d' Bema* of IV Sunday of the *Slihe* (Apostles): *Prayers Proper of the Holy Qurbana (hereafter cited as PPHQ)*, Vol. III, ed. J. Perumattam and A. D. Mattam, Satna 1976, 226.

tent and who shall live on your holy mountain" (Ps 15:1) and asks grace to stand before his altar with pure thoughts. At the time of great entrance the priest gives thanks to the Trinity by remembering the lowliness of his nature.⁹⁶ In the second part of the *kusappa* prayer after the *sanctus*⁹⁷ the celebrant joining with the attitude of prophet Isaiah, stands before the awesome throne of God. At the same, God's love, joy and hope fill him to praise the greatness and holiness of God in a profound way. The whole liturgy is an *eucharistia* to the Lord, because he accounted us worthy to participate in his glorious, holy, life-giving and divine mysteries'.⁹⁸ Though man is unworthy before the "Holy", by God's grace he is able to ascend and participate in that holiness. In the Eucharistic Liturgy the 'glory of God'⁹⁹ comes down and makes its dwelling with the people and sanctifies the bread and wine, so that by partaking in it the whole community may be made holy. Here the glory of God descends and draws the participant to ascend to his 'holy and divine nature'. This process is called deification.

Christ is the meeting point of God's glory and human ascent. The Human being is called to the true image of God, i.e. Christ, from his 'weakened and

tarnished image'. The Human being has a christological structure.¹⁰⁰ Human destiny is Christ. Christ, the incarnate Word and God-man, recapitulates in himself the whole plan of God for man. According to Ephrem, "He gave what belonged to Him and took what belonged to us, so that this mingling [with humanity] of His might give life to our dead state".¹⁰¹ Through Christ's humanity, a human being could have access to the divinity, or in other words, man's vocation is to participate in the deified humanity of Christ. God became humanized so that man may be deified. The Eucharist transports us into the state in which Christ is now, a state of glory. The purpose of God in creation is fulfilled through him in the Eucharist. The scenario of the Eucharist is the world in which man lives and Christ came to minister.¹⁰² He draws the world into himself and brings it into communion with God. The world cut off from the source of life is a dying world. The world drawn into Christ has found its real value and meaning in him and becomes the sacrament of God's presence.

b) Holy Qurbana: Sacrament of Christ's Presence

In the Holy *Qurbana* God's holiness is communicated through Christ's presence

96 RAZA, 40.

97 RAZA, 46.

98 There are eleven such usages in the RAZA. See RAZA, 37, 40, 50, 53, 55, 56, 66, 67, 68 (2), 69.

99 God's holiness is revealed in his 'glory' (*kabod*).

100 P. Nellas, *Deification in Christ*, 25.

101 H. Against Heresies 32:9 as quoted in S. Brock, *The Luminous Eye*, 28.

102 Cf. A. J. Philippou, "The Mystery of Pentacost", *The Orthodox Ethos*, ed. A. J. Philippou, Oxford 1964, 92.

and human (and cosmic) participation is realized by celebrating and partaking in the Word of God and the Body and Blood of Christ. It is the Sacrament of Christ's presence.

The holy and life-giving Word of God is celebrated most vividly in the Syro-Malabar holy *Qurbana*. Christ is present in the 'mystery of His Word'. According to Gabriel Qatraya, the presence of the Gospel Lectionary on the altar is the 'mystery of Jesus' presence' and the reading of it is the mystery of his preaching¹⁰³. The Scripture, especially the Gospels are like a mirror, Ephrem says;

The Scriptures are placed there like
a mirror,
he whose eyes are luminous beholds
there the image of reality¹⁰⁴.

Those who have faith ('luminous eye' in Ephrem's language) can see in that polished mirror the reflection of the divine reality¹⁰⁵. The celebration and proclamation of the Word in the Eucharist is a Sacramental act. The holy Word transforms and sanctifies the human being who hears it into a receptacle of the Word and a temple of the Holy Spirit¹⁰⁶. By hearing and assimilating this divine and lifegiving Word we may be transformed into God's holiness and have life everlasting.

c) Holy Qurbana as Human Ascent

The Eucharist is the offering of the Church. In this tradition the Eucharistic elements and the whole celebration of Eucharist is called as *Qurbana*, means "offering" or "oblation.." This term reveals the nature of the Eucharistic sacrifice as self - gift or sacrifice of human being towards God. In Christ, he offers himself to God. It is a spiritual ascendance.

The Human being has material and spiritual aspects. His offering also has two realms: material and spiritual. The bread and wine symbolizes the material realm; praise and thanksgiving symbolize the spiritual realm. They together form one single offering in the Holy *Qurbana*. Bread and wine are not mere figures of Christ, but in the wider sense the natural body of Christ, even before the *quddasa*. It represents humanity and the whole created universe assimilated in the body of Christ. The Offering of Christ's body and blood means the offering of ourselves and the whole created realm in Christ. It is also the ascent of human kind and the whole created universe to the nature of God in Christ. *Qurbana*, especially the *anaphora* is the oblation of Praise and thanksgiving¹⁰⁷. It is the supreme act of pure praise

103 G. Vavanikunnel, *Homilies and Interpretation* 92-93.

104 *H. Faith* 67:8 as quoted in S. Brock, *The Luminous Eye*, 57.

105 Cf. *RAZA*, 21.

106 Cf. A. Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World*, 33.

107 The *Anaphora* begins with the usual acclamation: "The Qurbana is offered to God, the Lord of all".

and thanksgiving which we offer to God in Christ. When we offer praise and thanksgiving to God in the Eucharistic prayer for creation and redemption, it is tantamount to offering back to God the whole creation redeemed in Christ.¹⁰⁹ Thanksgiving was the earliest Christian understanding of sacrifice.¹⁰⁹ This twofold offering, material and spiritual, is an upward movement towards God in Christ. The goal of every sacrifice or offering is to create, strengthen or re-establish the union with God. Humankind is unable to offer themselves because of their weak and frail nature. In Christ humanity offers themselves and ascend to God and he becomes a bridge of union between God and humankind and a veritable link of communion.

In the ultimate sense, Christ himself is the offering and the offerer. "We offer" is the phrase often used in the Holy *Qurbana*. According to Thomas Elavanal, "it is not our action of offering that makes it an oblation, but the oblation itself...It is the 'body and blood of Christ' we offer, not merely bread and wine".¹¹⁰ Eucharist is the memorial representation of Christ's self-offering on the cross. Only in Christ, the Church (with her the whole humanity and cosmic order) offers the spiritual sacrifice well pleasing to God.

d) Quddasa as Divine Descent

Holy *Qurbana* is also a *quddasa*, meaning sanctification. The human ascent by offering culminates in the divine descent, where the offering and the offerer are sanctified and transformed. 'The Holy Spirit is the sanctifier par excellence. In the Eucharist Holy Spirit comes down, sanctifies it and transforms it into the Body and Blood of Christ.

Fire is the symbol of the Spirit, which devours and transforms the offering. Ephrem says:

In Fire is the symbol of the Spirit it is a type of the Holy Spirit who is mixed in the baptismal water so that it may be for absolution, and in the bread, that it may be an offering.¹¹¹

The fire of the Holy Spirit which overpowers the bread and wine in the Eucharist makes the one who consumes it 'fire and Spirit' within.

By the coming of the Holy Spirit, (*epiclesis*), the sacrifice is filled with His presence and sanctified to the effect of transforming the sacrificial object into the glorified Body and Blood of Christ. Eastern Fathers generally consider *epiclesis* as consecratory¹¹². The Eucharist is the pneumatic body of Christ, mysteriously transformed by the effusion of Spirit at the moment of resurrection.¹¹³

108 T. Elavanal, *The Memorial Celebration*, 194.

109 Cf. Justin, *Dialogues* 41:2-3; 117:2; Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* IV, 17.5.

110 T. Elavanal, *The Memorial Celebration*, 204.

111 *H. Faith* 40:10 as quoted in S. Brock, *Holy Spirit in the Syrian Baptismal Tradition*, ed. J. Vellian, Pune 1979, 11.

112 For example, cf. E. Yarnold, *The Awe Inspiring Rites*, 71,80-81, 91,246; G. Vavanikunnel, *Homilies and Interpretation*, 60,73, 97.

By receiving this pneumatic body of Christ, we are also transformed bodily.

By the coming of the Holy Spirit, the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ. According to John Damascene, the consecrated Bread and wine are the deified Body of the Lord, because through them we partake in the divinity of Christ.¹¹⁴ East Syriac commentators stress the point that the Eucharist is Christ in reality. It is not a symbol, but is his Body and Blood by the action of the Holy Spirit.¹¹⁵ By the coming of the Holy Spirit, the community is unified, sanctified and deified. The Eucharistic celebration is the most vivid expression of the life of the Church, and it is the truest manifestation of the nature of the Church. The Church and Eucharist stand each as cause to the other. By *Epiclesis*, the community also becomes the body of Christ. Here in Eucharist, 'we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread' (1Cor 10:17). Commenting on this, Theodore of Mopsuestia says: "Since we all eat the same body of Christ our Lord and since this food gives all communion with him, we all become one body of Christ and receive communion and contact with him our

head".¹¹⁶ The sacramental body of Christ is given to the members of his (mystical) body as a pledge of resurrection in the Church. The *epiclesis* of the *Anaphora* of the Apostles prays that "it may be... unto the pardon of debts, remission of sins and the great hope of resurrection from the dead and new life in the kingdom of heaven".¹¹⁷ Here the Eucharist becomes the pledge of the final transformation, i. e. resurrection. The community ascends to God in Christ by offering the Eucharist and surrenders completely to the whole and permanent effects of God's saving mystery.¹¹⁸ In turn the descending Spirit in Christ sanctifies the community. By partaking of the deified body of Christ, the Eucharistic community, i.e. the Church, becomes a 'communion of deification'.¹¹⁹

Sanctification and deification through the Eucharist is not an isolated process for the human being only, but it is for the whole created universe. The Eucharistic celebration looks forward to the total transformation and sanctification of the universe in which the reign of God comes to its fullness. In the Apostolic Letter, *Orientalis Lumen*, Pope John Paul says:

113 Cf. J. M. R. Tillard, *The Eucharist: Pasch of God's People*, ET by D. Wienk, New York 1967, 105.

114 Cf. *On the Orthodox Faith*, IV, 3.

115 Cf. E. Yarnold, *The Awe Inspiring Rites*, 115; G. Vavanikunnel, *Homilies and Interpretation*, 70.

116 *Baptismal Homily V*, 24; E. Yarnold, *The Awe Inspiring Rites*, 252-53.

117 RAZA, 51.

118 Cf. L. Bouyer, *Eucharist*, 212.

119 Cf. Gregory Palamas, *Demonstrative Discourse* 2:78.

The Liturgy is heaven on earth and in it the Word who became flesh imbues matter with a saving potential which is fully manifest in the sacraments.... The Liturgy reveals the way of harmony of the new man, and invites him to respect the eucharistic potential of the created world. That world is destined to be assumed in the Eucharist of the Lord, in his Passover in the sacrifice of the altar.¹²⁰

Here, the Eucharist, as an expression of the deification of creation in Christ, acquires a cosmic dimension.

e) Communion in the Mystery of Precious Body and Blood.

Participation in the Body and Blood is the culmination of Eucharistic celebration. Christ is the Sacrament of God's life, and in him we have fullness of life (cf. Col 1:29). Communion in the body and blood of Christ means communion in the very life of God.

It is the 'medicine of life' that cures the moral nature of man. Christ is 'the physician who descended on earth and cured those who were rooted in their sins'.¹²¹ At the Last Supper 'the Life-giver of all blessed the food and it became the medicine of life for those who ate it'.¹²² By receiving this 'medicine of life', human beings are purified from sins, acquire new life and enter into the very life and nature of God.

The Eucharist, as we have seen, is the 'coal of fire' through the coming of the Holy Spirit. Theodore of Mopsuestia explains how ordinary bread and wine became a burning coal: "The coal was originally black and cold; but when it came to contact with the fire; it became bright and warm. The food of the holy mystery was to resemble the coal in this: what is offered is ordinary bread and wine, but by the coming of the Holy Spirit it is changed into the body and blood and so assumes the power of spiritual and immortal food".¹²³ This divine coal causes in us the fire of loving desire. It consumes our sins and illumines our hearts. Through participation in this divine fire, we ourselves will be inflamed and deified.

It is also the 'bread of immortality' given to the mortal beings. "...For this living and life-giving bread which came down from heaven gives life to all the world from end to end. Those who eat it do not die; those receive it are saved by it and are pardoned by it and live forever".¹²⁴ The partaking in the Bread of immortality is the participation in the immortal and holy nature of God.

In Holy Communion we meet Christ personally and enter into communion with him. He himself has promised this: "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me and I in him" (Jn. 6:56). Here Christ intermingles with the communicant in a very personal way. Ephrem writes:

120 *L' Osservatore Romano*, 3 May 1995.

121 *Onitha d' Bathe* of II Sunday of Resurrection: *PPHQ*, 11, 100.

122 Ephrem, *H. Unleavened Bread* 14:16 as quoted in S. Brock, *The Luminous Eye*, 77.

123 *Baptismal Homily* V, 36; E. Yarnold, *The Awe Inspiring Rites*, 259.

124 *RAZA*, 53.

127 RAZA, 57.

Trinitarian Foundation of Christian Ethics and Syro-Malabar Qurbana

We are bound at all times,
to thank, adore, and glorify
the magnificent, awesome, holy, adorable, blessed
and incomprehensible name of your glorious Trinity
and your goodness towards mankind,
Lord of all, Father, Son and Holy Spirit for ever (The Order of Raza,9).

Morality or ethics presupposes a vision of reality. Ethical norms are not an end in themselves, but they support and lead persons to a desired destiny. They depend upon a higher reality. The distinctiveness of an ethics is embodied in the vision of the reality that a particular person or community holds fast.¹

This principle holds good with Christian morality as well. Obviously the question one confronts at this juncture is, what is that reality which determines Christian ethics? The simple and short answer would be the mystery of the Holy Trinity, the source and summit of the Christian vision of life. The Symbol of Nicaea illumines and illustrates the truth of it, which is joyfully proclaimed by the eucharistic assembly.

This is an attempt to understand and appreciate the Trinitarian foundation of Christian ethics with a special reference to the *Syro-Malabar Qurbana*, the eucharistic celebration of one of the Churches of St. Thomas in India. It has two parts. The first part discusses briefly the foundation of Christian ethics as Trinitarian. The second part deals with the Trinitarian Christian ethics emerging from the celebration of *Syro-Malabar Qurbana*.

1. Foundation of Christian Ethics as Trinitarian:

The logic here is simple. Christian life is a life with, in and for the Holy Trinity. According to the believing Christian community, the Holy Trinity

1 Bernard Häring emphasizes the role of right vision as the basic task of moral theology: "Moral theology, as I understand it, is not concerned first with decision-making or with discrete acts. Its basic task and purpose is to gain the right vision, to assess the main perspectives, and to present those truths and values which should bear upon decisions to be made before God". *"Free and Faithful in Christ, Moral Theology for Priests and Laity, Vol. I: General Moral Theology* (Second Australian edition: St Paul Publications, 1979), 6.

is the foundation of Christian life. And Christian ethics is a discussion on the principles or norms of Christian life. Therefore, the principles of Christian life are hidden in the Holy Trinity, the foundation of Christian life. A working hypothesis here would be as follows:

Since the mystery of Holy Trinity occupies the focal point of Christian faith and revelation, it plays a vital role in formulating the world vision and in fashioning the style of every Christian's life, which involves decision making and appropriate action, in order to possess perfect bliss, the mystery itself.

1.1 Christian Life and the Trinitarian Mystery

The very source and summit of Christian life is the Holy Trinity. It is to the blessed Trinity that every Christian is originally and fundamentally initiated and introduced into during the sacraments of initiation in the Church. Every believer is baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This is a sacramental action through which every believer is brought to the Trinitarian life. Other sacraments in the Church are to nurture and to promote the life of the believer in the mystery of the Trinity. Secondly, according to the believing community, the source of

every life, in heaven and on earth, is the Holy Trinity and the ultimate goal of life is *theosis*, divinization or deification, which finds its culmination in the mystery of Trinity.² As the Holy Trinity is the source and summit of Christian life, it also supports and guides believers to the same reality, extending an opportunity to foretaste and participate in it. In this sense the locus and the focus of Christian life is the blessed Trinity.

1.2 Christian Vision as Trinitarian

Christian vision is rooted in and flows from the mystery of the Trinity. Precisely because the Holy Trinity is the source and summit of Christian life. Christians believe not only that God is the source of every life, but also that they are regenerated by the Holy Trinity in and through the sacraments. This is not the final stage envisaged by Christian vision. It is only a beginning of a greater realization. That is to say, Christians look forward and work towards the acceptable moment, when everything and everyone will be enjoying the glorious union and communion with the most blessed Trinity. The everlasting life with the triune God is the desired destiny of Christians. Thus, we see the Christian life is surrounded by and submerged in the Trinitarian mystery from its very

2 See *Lumen Gentium*, §§ 2-4. The second paragraph of the document clearly spells out the divine plan of the Father as: "His plan was to dignify men with a participation in His own divine life". Fourth paragraph of the same document concludes this section on triune God employing the words of St. Cyprian, "Thus, the Church shines forth as "a people made one with the unity of the Father the Son, and the Holy Spirit". See also *Ad Gentes*, §§ 2-4; *Gaudium et Spes*, § 24.

inception to its perfection in the company of the Holy Trinity. Christian faith paints life in this fashion. This faith and life in the Trinity shape the kernel of Christian vision. It is the Christian vision of life: the mystery of the Holy Trinity as the content and as the ultimate point of reference in life. In this sense, the most blessed Trinity is the root and the fruit of Christian life.

Christian Trinitarian vision, consequently, informs and formulates the ethical standard of life for the Christians. Since the source of Christian vision is the Holy Trinity, the values and norms of Christian life would proceed from it. Since the summit of Christian vision is again the Holy Trinity, it would promote the faithful towards the destiny stipulating necessary measures to be adhered to by the followers. So, on the one hand, the Trinitarian Christian vision lets the values and norms of Christian life flow from it, and on the other hand, the same vision directs and guides Christians to the ultimate goal, the Holy Trinity itself.

The initiation of a person into the Trinitarian Mystery, begun in baptism and continually nourished by the eucharist, enables one to be a living Mystery here and now. Caffarra articulates this phenomenon, "The human person is created to participate, in Christ and through the Holy Spirit, in the very life of God, becoming in this way the

place where God's glory is manifested".³ This is how one lives the Trinitarian vision in Christian life. It is a process of being and becoming the holy mystery of the Trinity. Having been inserted into the mystery of the Trinity through the sacrament of baptism, one is growing into it through the continued contemplation of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and through frequent participation in the eucharistic celebration of the Mystery.

1.3 Trinitarian Vision and Liturgical Celebration

The liturgy is the celebration of Christian life. It is, thus, the celebration of Christian vision. We have seen Christian vision is Trinitarian in essence. In this sense, the liturgy is a celebration of the mystery of the Trinity. That is to say, we celebrate the Trinitarian Christian vision in the liturgy. Therefore, the liturgy being the celebration of the Trinitarian Christian vision, it is right to say that the eucharist is the source and summit of Christian life. In this connection, Mark O'Keefe writes, "The liturgy celebrates the reality and promise of God's invitation to share in the mutual self giving of the Trinitarian love".⁴ It is true that in the celebration of the liturgy we encounter the mystery of the Trinity. Participation in the liturgy extends a foretaste of the Trinitarian mystery to the assembly. Frequent worthy participation helps believers form and transform themselves into the Holy Trinity.

3 Carlo Caffarra, *Living in Christ: Fundamental Principles of Catholic Moral Teaching* trans. Christopher Ruff (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989), 43-44.

4 Mark O'Keefe, *Becoming Good, Becoming Holy: On the Relationship of Christian Ethics and Spirituality* (New York/ Mahwah, N. J.: Paulist Press, 1995), 149.

On this ground, the celebration of the eucharistic liturgy occupies a prime place in the life of Christians. On the one hand, it is the celebration of Christian existence, and on the other hand, it is the celebration of the source and summit of Christian vision, the mystery of the Holy Trinity. They are not two independent things or events, but one. For the celebration of the Christian existence presupposes the celebration of the mystery of the Trinity and vice versa.

The eucharistic liturgy being the celebration of Christian life and vision, which is fundamentally concealed and revealed in the mystery of the Trinity, principally manifests the values and norms for the Christian way of life. In the light of discovering Christian ethics, Carlo Caffarra points out, "... it is in the Eucharist that we must locate, *in the full sense*, the foundation and root of our life in Christ and, thus, of Christian ethics".⁵ The reason is self-evident. Essentially Christian vision is hidden in the mystery of the Trinity. The Trinitarian Mystery is the centre of the Christian story. This story is being celebrated in every eucharistic liturgy. Gradually this story, which is a mystery, becomes the history of Christians. For the celebration of the liturgy helps form the vision in the faithful and transforms the members into the reality celebrated.

Therefore, the Christian story celebrated in the liturgy outlines the Christian way. O'Keefe presents the dynamism involved in the translation of Christian story into Christian decisions and actions, "In the liturgy, the Christian is formed in the Christian story and so takes on the distinctive self-identity, character, and virtues of the Christian that will impact all subsequent decisions and actions".⁶ In this manner, the liturgical celebration simultaneously presents the Trinitarian vision and promotes the believers in translating the vision into a reality.

1.4 Relevance of Trinitarian Christian Ethics

Today we notice an increased interest in exploring the original sources of experience in order to discover the newness and distinctiveness of a particular people or community. This trend is noticeable in the field of moral theology as well. It is echoed in the call of Vatican II to the development of moral theology.⁷ Two recent encyclicals, *Veritatis Splendor* and *Evangelium Vitae* of Pope John Paul II are certain attempts to develop Christian moral theology on scriptural foundations. Keeping the trend, exploring the sources to provide identity and specificity, moral theologians show interest in investigating the belief of a community. Truly, the mystery of the Trinity summarizes the

5 *Living in Christ*, 18.

6 *Becoming Good, Becoming Holy*, 148.

7 In *Optatam Totius*, § 16 we read, "Special attention needs to be given to the development of moral theology. Its scientific exposition should be more thoroughly nourished by scriptural teaching. It should show the nobility of the Christian vocation of the Faithful, and their obligation to bring forth fruit in charity for the life of the world".

Christian revelation and the foundation of Christian Community. Such study of the believing community discloses the mystery of faith and the context of believing community. Mark O' Keefe summarizes his understanding of Trinitarian focus of moral theology with its various practical aspects:

Moral theology cannot be restricted to norms and decision - making - nor even to virtue and character. Moral theology serves the Christian life aimed at sharing together in the divine life of the Trinity - a life with our sisters and brothers in triune community. The Christian life is a radically new life in Christ, conformed to Christ, transformed in Christ. It is then a life animated by charity, empowered by the indwelling Spirit, aimed at sharing in triune love. The Trinitarian focus of moral theology points to the important social dimension of both moral theology and spirituality. The authentic life of persons created in the image of a triune and personal God cannot ignore the needs and demands of other persons in the human community.⁸

This clarifies how the mystery of the Trinity permeates the life of a Christian in her/his community and how it projects a plan of action for the faithful in daily life. Carlo Caffarra presents the fundamental principle of Christian ethics as the mystery of the blessed Trinity. He synthesizes, "...Christian ethics is the

comprehension of human life in so far as it is participation in Trinitarian life itself. In Christ, through the Spirit, for the glory of the Father: this is the definition of Christian life. Christian ethics is the understanding of *this* life".⁹ This is a recapitulation of the Christian faith, which is inaugurated in and through the sacrament of baptism, and an affirmation of the Christian aspiration for divinization. Living in Christ through the Holy Spirit for the glory of the Father, thus, becomes an indicative and an imperative for Christians. It is an indicative, because it explains the present state of Christian existence according to the belief of the community. It is an imperative, because it is the ideal state of Christian life, to which Christians march in all earnestness with every limitedness.

Trinitarian Christian vision is essential for the completion of Christian ethics. For, Christian vision is incomplete and inadequate in the absence of the Trinitarian Mystery. The mystery of the Trinity explains to the faithful the significance and relevance of human history and the human-divine encounter in history. Beyond doubt, the Mystery of Trinity is fundamental to the revelation accomplished in Christ. It is Jesus Christ who revealed to us the mystery of the Trinity. He claims himself coming from the Father and declares that he is going back to Him. We are invited by Jesus to the perfection and abode of the Father through the promptings of the Holy Spirit, who dwells in hearts and gives counsel to believers. This forms the very core and content of

8 *Becoming Good, Becoming Holy*, 22.

9 *Living in Christ*, 44.

the revelation we have had in Christ. Emphasising the Trinitarian vision of Christian life in no way deviates from nor diminishes Christian revelation. On the contrary, the Trinitarian mystery explains and defines the mystery of Christ.

Besides, Trinitarian Christian vision helps believers appreciate the Christian story holistically. The moment we present ourselves to Christ, we are before his Father and his Gift, that is, the Holy Spirit. There is an inherent relatedness and oneness within the mystery of the Trinity¹⁰ and this is marvellously manifested in the creation as well. The prayer of Jesus is a clear testimony to the reality and to the movement of everyone towards oneness or bliss, "...that

they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou has sent me" (Jn 17:21). Praying to the Father, Jesus presented the purpose of his coming and set an ideal to his followers, which gives them a direction. It is important, therefore, to have a Trinitarian vision in order to have a faith explanation for every truth hidden in the Christian story of revelation.

Not only is the Holy Trinity the foundation of Christian ethics, but it is also the symbol of Christian perfection, consequently the focus of Christian ethics. Being initiated into the holy mystery of the Trinity and being nourished in

10 St. Ephrem has marvellously brought this mystery to light by a splendid imagery of Sun/Fire. This is found in his work titled *Hymns on Faith*, no. 73

1. Take as symbols of the Father the sun, of the Son the light, and of the Holy Spirit the warmth.
2. Being one, yet therein is to be seen a trinity; who can explain what lies beyond comprehension?
3. This one is multiple: the one consists of three, and the three constitute one, a great astonishment a manifest wonder.
4. The sun is distinct from its radiance, yet mingled with it, for its radiance is also the sun.
5. Yet none speaks of two suns, though its radiance is also sun to those down below.
6. Nor do we speak of two Gods, our Lord being also God over creation.
7. Who can probe how or where the sun's ray is attached, its warmth attached yet each is free?
8. Neither are they quite separate, nor indeed confused: distinct, yet each is free—a great wonder. Quoted from *The Harp of the Spirit, Eighteen Poems of Saint Ephrem*, intr. and trans. Sebastian Brock in *Studies Suppelmentary to Sobornost No. 4* (Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius, 1983), 83-84. See also CSCO 154-155, Syri 73-74 *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrsers Hymnen de Fide*, Edmund Beck, Hymn 73 and Hymn 40.

the holiness of the Trinity by contemplation and with the help of other sacraments, Christians march towards the fuller realization of the image of God originally imprinted in them. Full flowering of Christians takes place in deification. It consists in the participation of Trinitarian life. During this never ending march towards the mystery of the Trinity, Christian ethics characterized by Trinitarian vision helps form attitudes and dispositions proper to it in the believer, as and when one whole-heartedly cooperates with the promptings of the Spirit. Practically speaking, Christian ethics would help "the community and its members in discerning what God is enabling and requiring them to be and to do".¹¹ In the discerning and decision making of Christians, the Trinitarian Mystery has a decisive role, "Christians cannot make good choices reliably and consistently outside the context of their relationship with God in Christ through the presence of the Holy Spirit".¹²

Founded on the Holy Trinity, Christian ethics always focuses its attention and depends upon the same reality for its purposefulness. Lead by the Holy Trinity in their everydayness, the believers gradually appropriate holiness, the perfection of Christian life.¹³

1.5 Specialness of Trinitarian Ethics

The origin, the manifestation, and the fullness of Christian ethics is identified with the mystery of the Holy Trinity. As everything has its origin in the Father, everything is manifested in and through Christ, and all things are brought to fullness with the help of the Spirit, so is the origin, manifestation and culmination of Christian life. Consequently Christian ethics depends on the Trinity for its origin, manifestation and perfection.

In Trinitarian ethics, one observes the closeness and relatedness between Christian morality and spirituality.

- 11 James Gustafson, "Can Ethics be Christian? Some Conclusions," in *Introduction to Christian Ethics, A Reader*, eds. Ronald P. Hamel and Kenneth R. Himes (New York: Paulist Press, 1989), 138.
- 12 Mark O'Keefe, *Becoming Good, Becoming Holy*, 140.
- 13 James Gustafson analysing different "senses" of believer points out their correlation with certain dimensions of experiences of God and articulated beliefs about God, "The sense of radical dependence is correlated with the experience of and belief in God as Creator. The sense of gratitude is correlated with the experience of God as beneficent, as good in his creation, sustenance, and redemption of the world. The sense of repentance is correlated with the experience of God as moral authority and as judge. The sense of obligation is correlated with the experience of God as the orderer and sustainer of life. The sense of possibility is correlated with the experience of God as one who continues to act creatively and redemptively, as a God of hope. The sense of direction is correlated with the experience of God as the *telos*, the end of all creation". James M. Gustafson, *Can Ethics be Christian?* (Chicago: The University Press, 1975), 92-93.

Christian spirituality, the foundation and perfection of which is the life in the Holy Trinity, outlines the principles for Christian ethics. Christian morality, in turn, gives guidelines to the faithful to sustain their life in the mystery of the Trinity. Each of the branches of theological reflection depends upon the same mystery of the Trinity for their origin and help progress in the process of divinization.

We could recapitulate the salient features of the foregoing discussion in the following statement:

Christian revelation and tradition manifest that the mystery of the Holy Trinity is the source and summit of Christian life. The Trinity is the source of Christian life, because first, every life springs from the mystery and next, every believer is initiated into it through baptism and is impregnated with it through the periodical celebration of the eucharistic mystery. It is also the summit of Christian life, for first, they fundamentally share in the image and likeness of it that attracts them and next, it is the goal to which they ultimately march. The goal of Christian ethics is to support and lead the followers of the faith into the fullness of life, which is found only in the Holy Trinity. The logical conclusion would be that

the vision of the mystery of the Trinity has to lay the foundation to mould the hearts and minds of the believers to attune and to attain the divine mystery, the life of bliss.

2. Trinitarian Christian Ethics and Syro-Malabar Qurbana:¹⁴

Having discussed the Trinitarian foundation of Christian ethics, we shall now have a look at the Trinitarian Mystery celebrated in the *Syro-Malabar Qurbana* and try to highlight some of its ethical import for Christian living.

There is no doubt that the liturgy of the Church is one of the faithful and helpful instruments to comprehend and to communicate the faith and the vision of life she professes and proposes. The liturgy of the Church is a condensed and confirmed formulation of the living and long lived faith of the community. Thus we have the famous dictum, *lex orandi lex credendi*. Explaining this formula Varghese Pathikulangara points out two important contributions it makes, "This formula, on the one hand, proclaims that the Sacred Liturgy in the Church is the expression and means of strengthening the faithful in matters of faith, already made explicit, and on the other hand, reveals its importance in enlightening and making easy the process of establishing certain dogmatic

14 The text of the celebration I follow in this study is from *The Syro-Malabar Qurbana, The Order of Raza*, published by Syro-Malabar Bishops' Conference in 1989 and printed at San Jose Process, Trivandrum. From here onwards, *The Order of Raza* would substitute the above text.

facts".¹⁵ Donald E. Saliers, on the other hand, captures the inner and inherent connection between the liturgy and the daily life of Christians. According to him, "How we pray and worship is linked to how we live-to our desires, emotions, attitudes, beliefs and actions".¹⁶ Celebrating the faith experience of a community not only transmits the vision and the values embodied in it, but helps transform the participants from within.

It is with these thoughts in mind that I would like to highlight the Trinitarian Mystery celebrated in the *Syro-Malabar Qurbana* and to draw from it a few principles of Trinitarian ethics. In view of this, first of all, we shall list the important Trinitarian formulations or formulas of the *Qurbana*, which will enable us to comprehend the Trinitarian mystery celebrated. Then, we shall attempt to articulate a few principles of Trinitarian ethics. Here is a hypothesis that would give us a direction to conduct this study:

Liturgical celebration of the Syro-Malabar Qurbana manifests the belief of the community in the Trinitarian

mystery, which is the source and summit of Christian life and it in turn orientates her children to walk before, being ever faithful to, the most blessed Trinity.

2.1 Important Trinitarian Formulations

There is a special emphasis on the Holy Trinity in the *Syro-Malabar Qurbana*. Explicating the essential element of the Syro-Malabar spirituality, James Aerthayil highlights the Trinitarian Mystery celebrated in the *Qurbana*, "Though it originated and developed in the early centuries of the Christian era, the Divine Liturgy has very clear and precise ideas about the persons in the Trinity. It does not even hint at any Trinitarian problem, but only gives us a picture of the distinctive functions of the persons of the Trinity in relation to our salvation".¹⁷ Almost every oration of the *Qurbana* is either commencing or concluding in the name of the Trinity.

A list of remarkable confessions and exaltations of the most blessed Trinity in the *Qurbana* is helpful in

15 Varghese Pathikulangara, *Resurrection Life and Renewal* (Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 1982),

1. In one of the editorials the author puts forward the idea briefly, "Evidently, liturgy becomes the faith experience of the Church, while theology co-ordinates her faith reflection". *Christian Orient* 14 (June 1993), 57.

16 Donald E. Saliers, "Liturgy and Ethics: Some New Beginnings," in *Introduction to Christian Ethics, A Reader*, eds. Ronald P. Hamel and Kennerth R. Himes (New York: Paulist Press, 1989), 175. See also *Journal of Religious Ethics* 7 (Fall 1979): 173-189. Verlag, 1974), 199.

17 James Aerthayil, "The Trinitarian Dimension as the Essential Element of the Syro-Malabar Spirituality", *Christian Orient* 2 (September 1981), 99.

disclosing the importance the believing community attaches to it. Hence we have a list of a few important Trinitarian formulas below:

a. "May the adorable and glorious name of your blessed Trinity, be worshipped, glorified, honoured, exalted, confessed and blessed in heaven and on earth, at all times, Lord of all, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, for ever. Amen".¹⁸

b. "Lord of all, Father, Son and Holy Spirit for ever. Amen".¹⁹

c. "Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. From eternity and for ever. Amen".²⁰

d. "Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. From eternity and for ever and ever. Amen. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia".²¹

e. "In the name of your most Holy Trinity,...Father, Son and Holy Spirit, for ever. Amen".²²

f. "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen".²³

g. "I give you thanks, my Father, Lord of heaven and earth, Father, Son and Holy Spirit".²⁴

h. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all now and always and for ever and ever. Amen".²⁵

i. "Holy are you, God; you alone are the father of truth from whom is all fatherhood in heaven and on earth. Holy are you, eternal Son, through

18 *The Order of Raza*, 4. This is the opening oration on ferial days. With slight variations a similar prayer is said at the conclusion of Psalms, "We are bound at all times, to thank, adore, and glorify the magnificent, awesome, holy, adorable, blessed and incomprehensible name of your glorious Trinity and your goodness towards mankind, Lord of all, Father, Son and Holy Spirit for ever. Amen". *Ibidem*, 9.

19 This form is, explicitly, used to conclude the orations. It is used fourteen times in *The Order of Raza*, 4 (two times); 8;9 (two times); 13;15 (two times); 17;25;26; and 59.

20 This particular form is employed seven times, and often as an introduction to the repeated prayers in *The Order of Raza*, 2; 10; 12 (two times); 14;27;31.

21 This is made use of two times in *The Order of Raza*, both times to conclude: the first at the recital of Psalms, and the second at the hymn before the reading of gospel, 8;17.

22 It is a blessing formula and found in *The Order of Raza*, 10.

23 It forms the concluding part of a blessing occurring eight times, *The Order of Raza*, 23 (two times); 24 (four times); 48 (two times)

24 *Ibidem*, 33.

25 *Ibidem*, 37, 49.

whom all things were made. . . Holy are you, Holy Spirit, the Being by whom all things are sanctified".²⁶

j. "And grant us your tranquillity and peace all the days of the world that all inhabitant of the earth may know you, that it is you who are the only true God, the Father, and that you have sent our Lord Jesus Christ your Son and your beloved; and that, He our Lord and our God came and in his life-giving gospel taught us all the purity and holiness...".²⁷

k. "For, to you and to him and to the Holy Spirit belong glory and honour, thanksgiving and worship, now and always and for ever and ever".²⁸

l. "One alone is holy, the Father; one alone is holy, the Son; one alone is holy, the Spirit. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen".²⁹

m. "We are bound, O Lord, to offer to your most blessed Trinity glory and honour, praise and worship and perpetual thanksgiving for the gift of these, holy, life-giving and divine mysteries, which you in your mercy have given us for the forgiveness of our sins by your grace and your mercy, Lord of all, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, for ever. Amen".³⁰

2:2 A Passing Remark on the Trinitarian Formulations

Observing the abundant use of Trinitarian formulations in the *Qurbana* it is proper to make the following remarks on two grounds. First of all, it would disclose to the reader how well the Trinitarian doxology goes in tune with the oriental spirituality. Second, it would reveal to the reader how these Trinitarian formulations succeed in manifesting the mystery of the Trinity and the belief of the community in question.

2.2.1 The Name of the Most Blessed Trinity

One would be surprised to note the importance given to Holy Trinity through the number of occurrences of the name of the most blessed Trinity in the *Qurbana*. In the light of the list, the eucharistic celebration sounds to me as a poetic and musical praise rendered to the mystery of the Holy Trinity. The repetitive yet different formulations and articulations are not only an attractive method of praying, but also contemplative in nature. The *nama japa*, the prayer of the name, is a method of prayer very much in tune with the culture of India. And this prayer form is being suggested and adapted into Christian worship to deepen and widen the God-experience. Thus we can very well note the vibration of the

26 *Ibidem*, 38.

27 *Ibidem*, 44.

28 *Ibidem*, 51.

29 *Ibidem*, 53.

30 *Ibidem*, 60.

rich living tradition of repetitive form of prayer in our *Qurbana*, which is by all means to be kept intact as it helps the faithful to be absorbed by the mystery of our faith, which is nothing but the experience of the Trinity itself. Sincere regular recital of the "name" of the most blessed Trinity, as it is celebrated in the eucharistic liturgy, not only supports the believers to be always in communion with the mystery, but also promotes people to be on the track in their march towards fuller realization, ever recognizing and respecting the "name" of all in heaven and on earth.

2.2.2 The Mystery of the Trinity

The most solemn form of the eucharistic liturgy in the *Syro-Malabar Rite* is called *Raza*, which literally means 'mystery'. And it is just and right to celebrate the mystery of the Trinity in the celebration of the 'Mystery'. The role and function of the Trinity is well explicated in the prayers of the Liturgy. Take for example the prayer that the celebrant recites after the *Sanctus*, "Holy are you, God; you alone are the father of truth from whom is all fatherhood in heaven and on earth. Holy are you, Eternal Son, through whom all things were made. Holy are you, Holy Spirit, the Being by whom all things are sanctified".³¹ It is vivid and candid on the salvific function of the Trinity in relationship with the universe and everybody in it. There is a beautiful blending of both the Trinitarian Mystery and the salvation history in the above prayer. On the one hand, the mystery of the

Trinity, Father-Son-Holy Spirit, with their specific function is presented to the participants of the *Qurbana*, and on the other hand, it depicts the history of Salvation, commencing from the creation and leading to the divinization. This is an evidence of the fact that as and when we celebrate the mystery of the Trinity, we are celebrating the history of our Salvation. It substantiates our basic thesis that the mystery of the Trinity is the foundation of Christian vision, decision and action.

In the celebration of the mystery of the *Qurbana* both the mystery of the Holy Trinity and the history of Salvation are revealed and re-enacted. A special advantage in the celebration is that there is not any indoctrination or imposing of the teaching of the Church about the Trinity here. But there is an unveiling of the faith of the living community. Because the prayers of the liturgy are a condensed, continued and consistent vibrating expression of the faith of the living community. The participants willingly and joyfully commemorating the mysteries do absorb the story that their community treasures and transmits.

2.3 Toward a Trinitarian Ethics

Having listed the different Trinitarian formulations found in the *Qurbana* and having made the above remarks, we shall now attempt to develop a Trinitarian ethics emerging from the celebration of the eucharistic liturgy.

31 *Ibidem*, 38.

2. 3. 1 Trinity as background, ground and foreground of the Qurbana

It is quite interesting to note the opening oration and one of the concluding thanksgiving prayers to have a glimpse of the tone and the spirit of the celebration of the community. Examination of these two orations would unveil to us the unending hymn of glory and honour, praise and worship and perpetual thanksgiving that the community joyfully and willingly extend to the adorable and glorious name of the most blessed Trinity. The opening oration discloses the very ground of the gathering and sets the tone of the eucharistic celebration:

May the adorable and glorious name of your blessed Trinity, be worshipped, glorified, honoured, exalted, confessed and blessed in heaven and on earth, at all times, Lord of all, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, for ever. Amen.³²

One of the concluding thanksgiving prayers expresses the similar tone and accent with which the community commenced the celebration:

We are bound, O Lord, to offer to your most blessed Trinity glory and honour, praise and worship and perpetual thanksgiving for the gift of these, holy, life-giving and divine mysteries, which you in your mercy have given us for the forgiveness of our sins by your grace and your mercy, Lord of all, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, for ever. Amen".³³

A synoptic reading of these two prayers reveals itself the background, the ground and the foreground of the community worship. The background of the celebration is the holy Trinity. Great deeds of the Trinity, creation-redemption-divinization, in history unites believers together. The Holy Trinity is the background of the celebration, because it is the Trinity which gives the believers life and existence. Remembering the mystery of the Trinity in relation to the history of salvation, thus, serves as the background of the celebration. Believers come together to worship, glorify, honour and confess the name of the blessed Trinity. This is the reason or ground why they gather together and celebrate the *Qurbana*. Worshipping the Trinity, the community affirms the truth of their Christian existence, which is supported by the Holy Trinity. With the same sentiments of worship and perpetual thanksgiving, the community is about to close the eucharistic celebration. This is observable in the thanksgiving prayer quoted above. Here we have a sense of looking forward, indicating the future. When we see both these prayers together, we observe that the opening prayer picks up what the concluding thanksgiving prayer ends with. In other words, the latter concludes where the former commences. One sets the scene for the other and the other, in turn, carries it forward. An endless cycle of praise and worship. Thus we see that the whole atmosphere of liturgical celebration of the *Qurbana* is permeated with the praise and worship rendered

32 *Ibidem*, 4.

33 *Ibidem*, 60.

to the Holy Trinity. It is an eloquent testimony of the belief of the community.

Perpetual thanksgiving to the most blessed Trinity, at least as far as these profound prayers speak aloud, is the beginning-centre-end of Christian community. There is no room for misunderstanding that the glory, honour, praise, worship and thanksgiving are limited to the moments of special liturgical celebrations alone. But the same idea of exaltation and confession of the Trinity is to be continued in the every day life of the faithful. Due emphasis is laid down to this idea of life of worship in the above prayer with a special note, "We are bound" to render glory and honour to the most blessed Trinity "for ever". It reveals the aspiration of the faithful.³⁴ This is a confirmation and certification of their desire and decision to give glory and praise to the mystery in the light of reconciliation and communion experienced in the eucharistic celebration. The commitment of the community to continue the liturgical experience in their daily life is aired in the following oration:

Grant, O Lord, in your goodness, that all the days of our life we may, every one of us, together and in concord, please your divinity by good works of justice which appease and reconcile the adorable will of your majesty, and that we may be

made worthy, by the help of your grace, to offer you always glory and honour, thanksgiving and worship, Lord of all, Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

Thus, we note how the mystery of the Holy Trinity occupies the background, ground and foreground of the *Qurbana*. In other words, the most blessed Trinity pervades the entire celebration of the eucharistic Mystery. This is a clear indication of the reality of Christian existence that is and ought to be permeated by the Trinitarian Mystery, which is celebrated in the eucharistic liturgy. As the mystery of the Holy Trinity is the background, ground, and foreground of the *Qurbana*, so is the case with the life of every Christian. This has its ethical import as well. That is to say the mystery of the Trinity fundamentally helps form the decision and action of a Christian. Since the Holy Trinity takes possession of Christian life, it is quite normal to expect that the same Mystery provides a horizon for thought, word and action of every Christian. Thus the Trinity becomes the point of departure and the point of reference in every discrete Christian decision and action. Every movement of Christian life is supported and guided by the Holy Trinity. The Trinity lives in the believers and the believers live and move in the mystery of the Trinity. A way of life takes shape. Holy *Qurbana*.

34 This dimension is further brought to light in the following lines, "May He bless our congregation and preserve our assembly and make our people glorious who have come and been gladdened by the participation in his glorious, holy, life-giving and divine mysteries." *Ibidem*, 60.

35 *Ibidem*, 26.

promotes the faithful to endure this way of life. Experiencing the mystery of the Holy Trinity in the *Qurbana*, believers gradually become a living expression of it. Finally the faithful become what they believe.

2.3.2 Trinitarian Life: a Life of Celebration:

Trinitarian life as manifested in the history of salvation is an epiphany of unending celebration or life, which is being re-enacted in the eucharistic liturgy, fills the participants with the spirit of celebration.

First of all, from the specific function of the Triune God we come to know that the life of the Trinity is a grand celebration. The role of the Father, according to Christian faith, consists in creation. He is the root cause of all creation. This is what we proclaim in the creed "We believe in one God, the Father almighty, Creator of all things visible and invisible..."³⁶ During the solemn entry to the sanctuary the celebrant bows and prays, "I give thanks, my Father, Lord of heaven and earth, ..." The second *gehantha* of the *Qurbana* commemorates and worships the Holy Trinity as follows: "Worthy of praise from every mouth; of confession from every tongue and of worship and exaltation from every creature is the adorable and glorious name of your blessed Trinity,

Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, who created the world by your grace, and its inhabitants by your mercifulness and bestowed great grace on mortal men".³⁷ This mystery is again celebrated very explicitly immediately after *Sanctus* in the liturgy. The prayer is eloquent on the function of the Father: "Holy are you, God; you alone are the father of truth from whom is all fatherhood in heaven and on earth".³⁸

Creation itself is a wonderful celebration of life. The desire and decision of the Father to create, to bring newness, to effect movement, to infuse life are in themselves great manifestations of ever evolving and vibrating celebration. The Son, in and through whom everything is created and is saved, accelerates the cosmic celebration.³⁹ He attracts everyone and everything to this eternal celebration with the Father in the Spirit. His presence in the world gathers people and helps march to the eschaton, the already and not yet. The Spirit purifies the assembly so that she can worthily approach the mystery. The Holy Spirit guides and promotes the celebration, being the inner principle and spirit of the assembly. The prayer of epiclesis powerfully proclaims the function of the Holy Spirit during the celebration:

O My Lord, may your Holy Spirit come down.....And dwell in this *Qurbana* of your servants and bless

36 *Ibidem*, 32.

37 *Ibidem*, 33.

38 *Ibidem*, 37-38.

39 *Ibidem*, 38.

40 *The Col* 1:15-20; *Rom* 8:21; *Eph* 4:15-16.

it and sanctify it that it may be to us, O My Lord, unto the pardon of debts, remission of sins and the great hope of resurrection from the dead and new life in the kingdom of heaven with all those who have found favour in your presence.⁴¹

The Spirit renews the members of the community and offers new life. The outcome of a meaningful celebration is always renewal and subsequent new life. Here the function of the Spirit is exactly the same. Forgiving sins and extending hope, The Holy Spirit helps participants attain new life in the presence of the Lord. Thus we see the persons of the Trinity, Father-Son-Holy Spirit, constitute and continually contribute to this great celebration of the universe through creating, bringing unity and guiding *everybody* in a manner just and fitting to each *body*.

Next, the remembrance of the Trinity itself has a great effect on celebration to the extent that it is a manifestation of the pastness, presentness and future-ness of the Christian story. There is an eternal past, present and future present in the mystery of the Trinity. The Trinitarian mystery simultaneously reveals and conceals the past, present and future. In the mystery, time and space find an eternal presentness. Remembrance of the Trinity, by the very fact, brings alive the “before” and “after” in the nowness. Precisely this is what a celebration does accomplish in the day to day life of people. Celebration through its perceptible symbols effectively and efficiently introduces one into the holistic vision of

reality, consisting of and constituting the “yesterday”, “today” and “tomorrow”. Thus celebration, in general, reviews, re-lives and renews the memory in the givenness. After this pattern the whole story of creation-salvation-deification is re-presented and re-told as and when one contemplates and celebrates the Trinitarian mystery. This is what the faithful do in a wonderful manner in the *Qurbana*.

In a society characterized by lack of orientation, which jeopardises hierarchy of values in the ethical arena, the memory of the Trinitarian Mystery projects an orientation for life, and thus promoting the celebration of life. For, in the Holy Trinity, we have the answer to the questions concerning the origin, meaning and end of life. Meaning and significance of life are established and guaranteed to the faithful in the life-giving memory of the Trinity. Gradually and spontaneously the believer is immersed in the memory and in the values it embodies. Slowly these values become the guiding and directing principles of one's life. As a result these values take possession of the person and they become the normative and regulative principles of life, which enable the faithful to be people of celebration and life.

2.3.3 Trinitarian Life: a Life for celebration:

Trinitarian community not only celebrates life, but also it extends tips for celebration. Special characteristics of the Holy Trinity present a pattern of celebration for life. The persons of the

41 *The Order of Raza*, 45.

Trinity among themselves surpassingly demonstrate the fundamental dispositions and characteristics called for in a genuine celebration. They are, in essence, basic attitudes of loving kindness of the Father, the grace and truth of our Lord Jesus and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. This is how the Scripture depicts the characteristics of the trinitarian Godhead. St. Paul greets and blesses the community of saints with the following formula: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Cor 13:1). This formula is taken over and abundantly employed in the liturgical celebration of the Syro-Malabar *Qurbana*.⁴² In the Divine Liturgy this particular formula evokes a sense of invocation. Frequent use of this formula points to one important thing that the faithful are or ought to be filled with the spirit of the doxology. The spirit of love, grace and fellowship is to be the hallmark of a Christian. The task is demanding, yet rewarding. The specific features of the persons of the Trinity are to be sought after and realized by each and every believer. When these above values fill the believers in the community, it is a sure guarantee that there exists a fitting atmosphere for celebration.

There is an on-going and un-ending celebration in the Trinity. The Prophet Isaiah and the book of Revelation bear testimony to this eternal celebration, "They were calling out to each other:

"Holy, holy, holy! The Lord Almighty is holy! His glory fills the world" (Is 6:3). Invariably in every eucharistic gathering the assembly sings this un-ending hymn of praise and thanksgiving, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty. Heaven and earth are full of his praises. Hosanna in the highest; Hosanna to the son of David. Blessed is he who came and is to come in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest".⁴³ Syro-Malabar *Qurbana* proposes this hymn as a continuation of the cosmic celebration, which is reflected in the preceding prayer:

Worthy of praise from every mouth; of confession from every tongue and of worship and exaltation from every creature is the adorable and glorious name of your blessed Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who created the world by your grace and its inhabitants by your mercifulness and bestowed great grace on mortal men. O my Lord, thousands of those on high bow down and worship your majesty. Myriads upon myriads of holy angels, host of spiritual ministers of fire and spirit glorify your name; and with the holy cherubim and the spiritual seraphim they offer worship to your Lordship.⁴⁴

It again strikes the note and tone of Christian celebration. The whole universe and every being in it worships and exalts the adorable and glorious name of the most blessed Trinity. A marvellous scene of celebration, wherein heaven and earth

42 See footnote no. 25.

43 The *Order of Raza*, 38.

44 *Ibidem*, 37-8.

join in the unending hymn of praise. Here we have a blueprint for Christian celebration ⁴⁵: the image of God in a human being becomes visible and vibrant before the Holy Trinity; the original purpose of creation is restored; the inter-relatedness of every being is confessed in the presence of the Creator God; heaven and earth merge in one another; grace and mercy of God upon the inhabitants; and glory to the Lord.

It is of paramount importance to notice that the on-going and un-ending celebration in the assembly of God, indeed, is the result of the atmosphere of fellowship pervaded and permeated by love and grace. The believing community time and again invokes this blessing formula, which emphasizes the specific characteristics of the Holy Trinity, upon herself. Invoking the Trinitarian blessing, the congregation re-lives and renews the desire to cherish the love, the grace and the fellowship in her life. Being transformed into the characteristics of the Holy Trinity the faithful celebrate their life in the context of their community.

2.3.4 Trinitarian life: a Call to Celebration:

Trinitarian life, which is a celebration of and for life, calls us to celebrate our life now and forever, ever rediscovering and restoring the image of God by every individual celebrating of the mystery. It is quite natural to reflect and radiate the spirit of the mystery of the Trinity in the life of the community, while she

depends on it for her existence. The spirit of the Trinity is nothing but celebrative and communitarian. In general, the holy *Qurbana* is structurally a communitarian celebration. It is a public act performed *by, in, for* the people of God. Besides, the Trinitarian formulations we have listed in this study manifest this reality of communitarian celebration. Joining the Holy Trinity, the faithful wish that this celebration last for ever. Every enlisted Trinitarian formulation in fact, ends up with the particular phrase "for ever." As a consequence, the celebrative and communitarian spirit must vibrate and thrive in the life of the believing community. Moreover, the purpose of ethics is to help people celebrate life in the concrete context of the community. If not, what good can come out of it? Because every celebration is not only a sign of life, but it is also meant for life. And life springs from celebration. Furthermore, the Christian community must be a celebrating community on the simple ground that it is founded in and moved by the Holy Trinity.

Pauline appeal to the community of Christians, "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice" (*Phil* 4:4) and "Be joyful always; pray continually; give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (*1 Thes* 5:16) could be read against this background of celebration of Christian life.

45 In this universal celebration we have a solid foundation for developing a Christian approach to ecological issues.

The Liturgical celebration of the community enables the members to celebrate the mystery of their life against the background of the salvation history accomplished by the Father in Christ and through the Spirit. Every time the assembly gathers before the Lord, she does remember and thank the Lord for the great mystery of salvation. Periodical celebration of the mystery leaves the imprint proper to the Trinity on the participants. It enables them to recover and restore the original image of God in them. Being before the image of God capacitates the believers to remember the divine daughtership / sonship in the Son through the Spirit. Thus, the community is energized and empowered to walk (*halak*) before the Lord giving praise and thanksgiving as a continuation of the mystery they have celebrated in the assembly.

The liturgical celebration takes place always in the context of a community. That is to say Christian celebration has to find expression in the welfare of every one in the community. It consists, fundamentally, in doing justice (*hesed*) to each and everyone. Therefore, Christian celebration is never an escape from the concrete demands of the society. A Christian who celebrates her/his life is one who helps others to celebrate their life. This is the example of Trinitarian community: the love of the Father takes initiative in sending his only Son to save the world; the Son becomes human in order to fill it with divine; the Spirit continues to counsel the disciples, ever remaining with them.

The incessant praise and thanksgiving rendered to the most blessed Trinity in the assembly of the faithful during the eucharistic celebration of the Qurbana not only reveals the faith of the believing community in the mystery of the Trinity, but also helps participants to be absorbed by the fathomless mystery. Besides, inspired by the Trinitarian celebration of life, believers shall celebrate their life while helping others to celebrate their life in the context of their community after the example of the Trinity, which is the key to genuine celebration of life.

2.3.5. Trinitarian Christian Ethics as Communitarian:

The Trinitarian dimension of Christian ethics, which is communitarian in character, fully agrees with the nature of the Church. For the Church is an assembly of the elected. The Church is a community of persons gathered in the name of the Holy Trinity. The prayer accompanied with the making of sign of the Cross manifests this mystery and reality. The celebrant and the congregation lavishly use the sign of the Cross during the celebration of the *Qurbana*.

Christian community gathered before the Lord begins or seals every action invoking the mystery of the Trinitarian community. The Trinity is a community of three persons in one, a symbol of communion and community. One of the often used Trinitarian formulas is "Glory be to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. From all eternity and forever. Amen". The celebrating community too makes use of this Trinitarian praise

abundantly in the *Qurbana*. This concise prayer shows their deep faith in the Trinity and projects their inner desire to be a community. The Church, the assembly of the saints, reiterates this communitarian dimension, which is primordially and pre-eminently present in the Trinity. There is or should be a reception, a donation and a continued communication in the community of the gathered after the fashion and style of the Trinitarian life. It is to this eternal givingness of the Father, endless receptiveness of the Son, and everlasting presence of the Spirit that each and every Christian strives for in his/her relationship to his/her fellow beings. Being in communion with the Holy Trinity, believers aspire and strive to be in communion with everybody. The scope of communion for the community of the believers is limitless, like the mystery of the Trinity. It is to this style of Trinitarian life – the prototype of all communitarian life – every believer is invited and introduced into, no matter the contexts of Christian life differ from person to person.

Christian community imbued with and immersed in the spirit and style of Trinitarian life has a challenging call to create constantly and consistently the community of covenant with God, human beings and the world. The love of the Father, the grace of the Son and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit care for and foster the Trinitarian community. Similarly the loving kindness of the Father, the graceful truth of the Son and the perpetual fellowship of the Holy Spirit shall be the permeating spirit in the Christian community. It is easier for the believers to model their life after

the pattern of Trinitarian life, for the mystery of the Holy Trinity dwells in and compels them to be communitarian.

2.3.6 Trinitarian Function and Moral

Action:

The mystery of the Trinity entails the celebrants to form and to transform their life in accordance with the inner dynamism and principle of the mystery celebrated. This, to my mind, draws different relevant guide lines for the every day life of Christians after and before the celebration. It becomes the measure to test oneself whether she/he is fully integrated into the celebration.

Following the pattern of the Father, believers are summoned to **creativity**. The faithful are invited to follow suit in the great function of the Father. There are a number of ways through which one can contribute to the preservation and promotion of the original and continued creation of God. It could take definite and decisive forms of this creativity at different levels and in manifold ways. Since every believer is called to this life-giving mission of the Father, each and every member of the body of Christ has to embody this life-giving and creative mission and to be the ambassador of the good news *of* and *for* life. Nobody can excuse himself/herself from this great divine call and human challenge. It is not simply because of the rational grounds that the believers give consent to, but also it forms the very part and pattern of Trinitarian operation. Believers, in spite of their varied vocations and multifaceted ministries in the Church, have to come to terms with the creative and generative

power of the Trinity in order to celebrate life in the context of their respective spheres of life.

Sharing in the creative and generative power of the Father may mean different things to different people. It may mean tender loving kindness in the case of a few. But, it could mean pro-life, pro-family in the case of couples in the atmosphere of unconditional love, mutual understanding and responsible parenthood. Maintaining the distinct and unique mission towards life one could be excellent examples of being efficient ministers in the Church and responsible parents in the family. That is to say, there are innumerable ways through which one can participate in and project the eternal creativeness of the Trinity depending on the special and personal stages or *ashrama* of life. This is how each and every believer contributes to the cosmic celebration, which is manifested in the celebration of the mystery of the blessed Trinity.

After the pattern of our Lord Jesus Christ believers are invited to a life of *gracefulness* and *truthfulness*. For this is how the second person of the Trinity is presented in the Scripture and in the liturgical prayers of the Church, "The Word became a human being and, full of grace and truth, lived among us" (Jn 1:14). That is to say the Way opened to Christians is one of grace and truth, which respects and promotes life. For, the faithful believe that Jesus is the way, the truth and

the life. Being ever truthful on their way, believers attain life in every aspect. People who confess that Jesus is the Saviour are duty-bound to follow his footsteps, being truthful and graceful with their fellow beings on the path of life.

The main purpose of incarnation was to manifest the divine love of the Father being born as a human in order to make humans divine. Divinization or theosis is the human destiny. This is what the early Fathers of the Church and the liturgical prayers testify to us. St. Ephrem observes, "He gave us divinity, we gave him humanity".⁴⁶ The prayer of the Church is also illustrative of the fact, "...because you have done us great favours which cannot be repaid in that you put on our humanity in order to vivify it by your divinity..."⁴⁷ If this is our cherished desire, the ways and means to attain it would be sought and found. But for the followers of Christ there is no sure way other than Jesus himself. His way was one of *kenosis*, "He always had the nature of God, but he did not think that by force he should try to become equal with God. Instead of this, of his own free will he gave up all he had, and took the nature of a servant" (Phil 2:5-11). Being servant on earth, Jesus showed the love of the Father to the world and he took the world to the Father. In service, he found the celebration of life. He set the model of a servant as the key to celebrate life. This does not deny our

46 *Hymns on Faith* 5:17.

47 *The Order of Raza*, 42.

friendly relationship with Jesus. Rather he portrayed the picture of a real friend in being a servant. Irrespective of place and persons, he succeeded to be at the service of life. His presence, be it at the Meal table, or on the street, or in the company of the people, revealed the love and the life of the Father. Thus, Jesus powerfully and successfully communicated the Father's vision of life through his witness of love and the life of *kenosis* characterised by *diakonia* on earth.

Now, the same mission every believer in the community takes upon himself/herself: to witness to the vision of life bequeathed by the Father in and through graceful and genuine service. In this manner the disciples of Jesus shall be made known before others. The concluding part of the new commandment enshrined in the Johannine writings makes a similar demand, "And now I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. If you have love for one another, then everyone will know that you are my disciples" (*Jn* 13:34-35). He came to give us life in abundance. Jesus says: "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" (*Jn* 10:10). Today this is a more relevant theme for the disciples to dedicate themselves too.

After the example of the Holy Spirit, believers are informed of the *togetherness* with every being. This togetherness is unlimited as the power and presence of the Spirit knows no limits of place, person or time. Believers experiencing and living the mystery of the Holy Spirit are always in the

company of this Spirit. In turn the indwelling Spirit of the Lord in the faithful guides them to express and to extend this fellowship in ever greater measure.

The matter of fellowship has become a casualty in our modern society. Increasing numbers of associations and agencies in our modern society clearly indicate that the human being is in need of companionship. One way or another, people find it difficult to maintain fellowship in their everyday life in spite of the multiplication of the memberships in associations of various levels and classes. It does not mean that these associations are useless or helpless in imparting a company to people of our times. They do help, and they are of use to a certain extent to help people relate and bond. If they could assist in awakening the image of God, which is triune, in man, it would be a big step in solving the loneliness and isolatedness of humans. For the moment one understands and appreciates the perpetual oneness of the Spirit within and around the person, she/he is no more alone but always with the source of fellowship. Drawing energy from the source, one could opt for a life of celebration characterized by an ever increasing and never ending companionship.

2.3.7 Trinitarian Ethics: A Call to Holiness:

Everyone is called to holiness. The conciliar document teaches clearly, "The Lord Jesus, the divine Teacher and Model of all perfection, preached holiness of life to each and every one of His disciples, regardless of their situations": (*LG* 40). By this official teaching

of the Church, the so-called separation between good and holy was pulled apart. Mark O'Keefe observes, "Moral Theology became the discipline for guiding the ordinary lay person, while spiritual theology became the discipline for the elite few called to true holiness. Thus the ordinary person could aspire to become good, and an elite few could strive to become truly holy".⁴⁸ According to O'Keefe the ideal of Christian life was different in the East. The aspiration Eastern Christians shared is "to become not only good and holy but to become sharers in the divine".⁴⁹

The call to holiness, shared by every believer, has its foundation in theological anthropology on the human person as the image of God. Restoration and perfection of God's image in human beings on earth is the task of Christian ethics. And this is to be achieved through the ongoing conversion of human beings. It is to this un-ending *metanoia* of heart we are invited to live for ever. The message becomes clear during the public appeal of Jesus to "be perfect just as your Father in heaven is perfect"! (Mt 5:48). Jesus himself is the model for every Christian on this ever going process of *theosis*. The deification of humanity is not a "work" of any one of the divine Persons, but of the entire Trinity. George Mantzaridis reflects as follows: "The orientation of man toward

the Father and his deification is the common accomplishment of the Trinity, brought about through the love of the Father by the Son in the Holy Spirit".⁵⁰ When one addresses God as "our Father", as taught by Jesus, the only Son of the Father, in the Spirit, she/he remembers and celebrates the mystery of holiness. Moreover, it reiterates and reaffirms the image of God in human beings.

All the same, the community believes and proclaims that Holy Trinity alone is holy. All others are marching towards holiness. Towards the conclusion of the Rite of Reconciliation and just before the Rite of Communion this truth is brought to light. The response of the community to the invitation of the celebrant is as follows: "One alone is holy, Father; one alone is holy, the Son; one alone is holy, the Spirit. Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen".⁵¹ It is not a denial of holiness in the community. On the contrary, it highlights that holiness is to be seen always in proportion to one's closeness to and oneness with the Holy Trinity. Since everyone is radically rooted in and basically orientated to the Trinity, all without exception, participate in the same holiness. Furthermore the "Holy Things" come to abide in the believer and help her/him to be holy. That is to say, the "Holy Things" enable the

48 *Becoming Good, Becoming Holy*, 59.

49 *Ibidem*.

50 quoted in *Ibidem*, 61-62.

51 *The Order of Raza*, 53.

faithful to be holy in their daily lives. "The growth in holiness, however, will be nourished by an active and fruitful participation in the liturgy".⁵²

Thus, the Holy Trinity attracts and assists in the endeavour of the believer in being holy, discovering the holy image of the triune God, in thought, word, and deed of one's day-to-day life. The believer not only walks on the path of holiness, but also lives and moves in it. The purpose of ethics is to help believers walk towards the abode of holiness, where they enjoy the company of the most blessed Trinity, which is nothing less than becoming divine and celebrating their life now and forever.

To conclude:

The most blessed Trinity is not only the foundation of Christian ethics, but is also its focus, while it is the Trinitarian Mystery which is the source and summit of Christian story, vision, and life. Introduced into the Trinitarian Mystery by the sacrament of baptism, the eucharistic celebrations in the Church help the Christians grow in the Trinitarian life. Growing in the mystery of the Trinity, Christians aspire and

consequently march towards the ultimate goal of divinization. During this upward and forward march in the process of divinization or holiness, the loving kindness of the Father, the grace of the Son and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit accompany and assist the faithful. Living in the presence of the Holy Trinity naturally transforms the Christians to the creativeness of the Father, the gracefulness and truthfulness of the Son and the togetherness of the Spirit, which is the key to Christian communitarian celebration. Celebrating the Qurbana, on the one hand, Christians glorify the Holy Trinity, which is the background, ground and foreground of Christian life, and on the other hand, they submit themselves to the mystery of the Trinity and guided by the eternal givingness of the Father, endless receptiveness of the Son, and everlasting presence of the Spirit. Frequent celebration of the Qurbana unites the believers with the mystery of the Trinity and with the members of the community together with everybody in the world and offers them the horizon of Christian vision and action, which establishes meaningfulness and purposefulness of life leading to wholeness and holiness.

Paulachan Kochappilly C M I

52 Cuthbert Johnson, "Life of our Life-Understanding Liturgy", in *Church and Its Most Basic Element*, ed. Paul Pallath (Rome: Herder Editrice e Libreria, 1995), 112.

A Methodology for Syro-Malabar Sacramentology

Everyday in India, we are confronted with different religions and religious practices. It is not surprising to see that all these religions have their own rites of passages. The Hindu religion being the largest religion in India, has influenced the Indian culture and other religious groups. Christianity has adopted many theological terms, rituals, signs and life style from Hinduism. However we will see that Christianity has not adopted the term *samskara*, the sanskrit term of Hindu rites of passages and rituals for the Christian sacraments. Nevertheless we see that the scholars are increasingly translating the term *samskara* as sacrament.¹ Is there a difference between *samskara* and sacrament?

Added to this, any catholic in India has to encounter three different catholic traditions. Although they have the same faith and same sacraments, there is clear distinction in their terminology regarding sacramental mysteries. Though the term *Qudasa* equivalent to English sacrament is derived from Syriac *Qandis*, Syro-Malabar liturgy never uses that term except in its verbal form, *Qudasa cheyuka*, which means to consecrate.²

What the Latin Church calls the sacraments the Eastern Churches refer to as the holy mysteries. What marks this difference? We see a similarity among the rituals of different religions, but a clear distinction. There is also a distinction in the notion of sacraments among the individual churches in the catholic faith.

In the catholic traditions, priesthood and marriage are sacraments while the consecrated religious life is not included in the list of seven sacraments. Why is this so? There are also other unanswered questions regarding sacramental grace and causality etc. This article is a search for some satisfactory answers to such questions. This gives a foundation from which we can extend and build up convincing answers to those questions primarily, the question about the uniqueness of the Christian sacraments.

The argument of this task is fulfilled through a search into the theology of *mysterion*, the term used for the sacraments in the early Church and used in the Eastern Churches to the present and into the meaning of *sacramentum*, the term used in the Latin Church and prevalent in sacramentology.

1 R. B. PANDEY, *Hindu Samskaras, Socio-Religious Study of the Hindu Sacraments*, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1976, p. 15.

2 *Syro - Malabar Qurbana, The Order of Raza*, (Malayalam), Ernakulam, 1989 p.79.

2 Foundations of Syro-Malabar Sacramentology

The Syro-Malabar Church did not develop a dogmatic sacramentology rather, it gives interpretations of its liturgical celebrations. The Western Church developed a theology of the sacraments based on different philosophies. In the Syro-Malabar Church there is a growing adaptation to these Western theological trends. In this age of 'returning to the sources' many theologians try to shake off the dust of the Western 'legalistic and speculative interpretations and to find a suitable theology for the Church. In the case of sacramentology, the Syro-Malabar Church is more patristic and keeps hold on even the terminological patrimony by designating the sacraments "sacred mysteries".³

2.1 Liturgical Sacramentology

Theology can be understood as an ongoing process of reflection on the significance and value of religion within

a culture, a process which is guided by a method. It is not religion in the abstract which is the object of reflection but "a concrete religion as it has been lived, as it is being lived, and as it is to be lived".⁴ Liturgical theology reflects on religion as it appears in public corporate worship and there are many unknowns which can be designated as topics of explorations.⁵

2.1.1 Liturgy As Ecclesial Ritual Praxis

The church can be understood as a community which is continually in the process of being constituted by the gifts of God's Spirit and proclamation of Christ's message.⁶ This occurs in the local communities where the handing on of the message from generation is a form of praxis alive and active. It is the duty of the theologian to question, scrutinize, make explicit and thematic that praxis.⁷

Liturgy should be the foundation for sacramental theology for *lex orandi*,

3 Syro - Malabar Qurbana, p. 119; Syro - Malabar Ordination Rite, (Malayalam) Ernakulam, 1959, pp. 47,52,60, 64,66,70.

4 B. J. F. Lonergan, *Philosophy of God and Theology*, Philadelphia, 1973, p. 56.

5 There are questions to be asked about the foundations and possibility of such worship, dynamics of worship, history, social, cultural and political contexts of the worship, liturgical sources, language and symbols, anthropology, christology, pneumatology, ecclesiology, sacramental theology etc.

6 B. J. F. Lonergan, "The ongoing Genesis of Methods", *A Third Collection* (ed.) Frederick E. Crowe, New York, Paulist, 1980, p. 161; B.J.F. Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, New York, Herder and Herder, 1972, pp. 361-64.

7 B. J. F. Lonergan, "Theology and Praxis", *Proceedings of the Catholic Theological Society of America* 32 (1977) 1; Margaret, M. K., "Liturgical Theology: A Task and A Method", *Worship* 62/2 (1988) 2-24, p. 5.

*lex credendi*⁸ The traditional role of the celebration of the sacraments are important to understand what is sacrament. In the patristic period the basis for sacramental catechesis and for an understanding of what occurred in sacraments was the liturgical texts.⁹ The medieval theology was also influenced by the facts when and how sacraments were celebrated. While the celebration of the liturgy of sacraments was traditionally one of the bases for the understanding of sacraments, the contemporary theology should also be liturgical.¹⁰

Liturgy was formed first. Theology is the understanding of the liturgy. The Second Vatican Council called the theologians to return to the sources. In the case of sacramental theology, liturgy is the source. Various aspects of the theology develop from the liturgical texts.

2.1.2 Method of interpretation

Liturgy is not limited to the texts but there is much that is enshrined in the prayer texts of the liturgy that relates to the church's belief about sacraments. The literary genre of prayers, the intrinsic relationship between *confession* and *anamnesis* in these prayers are all the objects of study.

2.1.2.1 Action Dimension

Confession and *anamnesis* in the prayers of sacramental celebration disclose that a key moment in every sacramental action links verbal doxology with the experience of God acting here and now. Liturgy of sacraments is a composite of texts, rites, and symbols experienced in ritual actions of ecclesial assemblies. They are oriented to enactment and implies attention to *praxis*, since the Church experiences specific acts of worship, not the compendium of rites in printed form.¹¹ The actual

- 8 The law of worship is the law of faith. This concept is very prevalent in Eastern theology and particular laws. Placid J. Podipara, *The Canonical Sources Of The Syro-Malabar Church*, X.Koodapuzha (ed.), Kottayam, OIRSI, 1986 and A. Thazhath, *The Juridical Sources of The Syro-Malabar Church* (A Historico-Juridical Study), Kottayam, OIRSI, 1987 give the liturgy as the source of theology and laws of life.
- 9 The catechesis of St. Cyril of Jerusalem, that of St. Ambrose on the sacraments of initiation, The Catechetical Homilies of Theodore of Mopsuestia, are good example for this.
- 10 K. W. Irwin, "Sacramental Theology: A Methodological Proposal", *The Thomist* 54 (1990) 311-342, pp. 314-315.
- 11 Most of the post-conciliar works on liturgical theology emphasize this action dimension to greater or lesser degrees. Cf. Mary Collins, "Critical Questions for Liturgical Theology", *Worship* 53 (1979) 302-317, "Liturgical Methodology and the Cultural Evolution of Worship in the United States", *Worship* 49 (1975) 85-102 and "The Public Language of Ministry", *Official Ministry in a New Age*, J. H. Provost (ed.), Washington, Canon Law Society of America Permeant Studies No. 3 (1981) 7-40.

performance of sacramental rites are seen as a pivotal source for sacramental theology.

2.1.2.2 Historical Dimension

The historical method in liturgiology should be emphasized. The evolution and the meaning of texts through that evolution are to be studied. Use of historical method leads to important insight about the original and successive version of the text. Analysis of an evolution of a given text can show how it has influenced the theology and spirituality. This method points out how the liturgy and contemporary theology expressed same beliefs.

Liturgical texts are not intended to serve primarily as doctrinal formulation; they describe the present community's experience of the paschal mystery and are framed in language that is mythical,¹² metaphorical, and poetic. Hence, more is involved here than amassing and comparing texts.

2.1.2.3 Tools of Interpretation

Only through appropriate tools of interpretation we can determine what a text says and means. The same tools of the systematic theology and hermeneutical tools can be made use of. It is impossible

to interpret the text independent of medium of language which can clarify as well as distort the setting in which one experiences a text.¹³ For this method the liturgical texts are understood as normative for what the church believes about sacraments. Because of the way they are used and in the light of other ways the liturgy communicates, prayer texts alone cannot be understood to be determinative of what the church experiences through the liturgy or of what she believes about the meaning of sacraments.¹⁴

Liturgical texts live in the acts of liturgical celebration. Hence other aspects of the liturgy need to be taken into consideration. We have to see whether the community actually heard the texts prayed or whether they actually understood them as they were spoken in order to understand how influential the texts are.

Study also should include a comparison between the liturgical texts prayed and other contemporary prayer texts. The setting of the liturgy and ministries exercised reveal to what extent the communitarian assumptions of liturgy were actually experienced.

Investigation into the postures and gestures in the liturgy helps to determine the community's active participation and thus the influence of them on the participants which is an important part

12 Liturgy is the faith celebrated. Cf. *Syro - Malabar Qurbana*, p. 7.

13 Liturgy was formed in different faith centres, which are also intellectual centres. There was different apostolic tradition, culture, language, and philosophy of thought which paved way for different liturgical families. These influences are to be studied in interpreting the liturgical texts. The text out of context is pretext.

14 This tool is used in David Power's *Unsearchable Riches: The Symbolic Nature of the liturgy*, New York, Pueblo, 1984.

of the study of sacramental theology.¹⁵ The rubrics and comments during the liturgy are also to be investigated.¹⁶ Forms of verbal expression need to be acknowledged and assessed for the prayer texts of a given ritual. Liturgy and theology should intersect and how they can be mutually enriching is an appropriate understanding of the notion of *lex orandi, lex credendi*.

We find Syro-Malabar theology of sacraments under the titles, liturgy, rite, symbol, culture, inculturation, religion and popular religiosity. This is related very specifically to cultures and their religious sense. Syro-Malabar theology of the sacraments and worship is primarily liturgical. The liturgy being the means of education and faith formation in the Eastern Churches, there is no better source other than the liturgy for a sacramentology. The writings of the Fathers of the Church on the liturgical celebrations and their preparations, serve as a primary source of the sacramentology.

Along with historical, liturgical, and theological considerations, placing sacraments under the general heading of liturgy, permits the study of sacraments as rituals, in which there is a considerable interaction of corporal, visual and

verbal expression, all having a relation to cultural experience and tradition. The liturgical act itself generates an understanding of sacrament and of participation in it. The studies of liturgical performance could add to this comprehension of sacrament from within the act itself.

2.3 Mysterion

Words are symbols and symbols manifest the hidden and unexpressed realities. The study of terms brings out the reality they manifest. The investigation into the original terminology of sacraments is an important method to get theology of the sacraments. As we have mentioned above, the mystery is the original term used to denote the sacraments of the church.

Greek usage of the term mystery and its meaning, extend from the mysteries of Eleusis to philosophy and to a general secular meaning, but with a religious colour. Parallel to this, there is a Hebrew term *rāz* developed from the Old Testament. Both *mysterium* and *rāz* are encountered in the New Testament especially in Paul and handed down to the present day by the Fathers of the

15 It is scientifically shown that the ritual acts are the external expression of the internal attitude of man. Cf G. Worgul, *Magic to Metaphor: a validation of Christian sacraments*, New York, Lanham, 1985.

16 For example; The fundamental attitudes of praise and thanksgiving are clearly articulated by the standing posture. The kneeling posture indicates that of petition and penance. The way of distribution of eucharist shows the meal symbolism or other. The orientation of the congregation and the celebrant towards the east in the liturgical celebrations of Syro-Malabar church shows the eschatological vision of that church and that of eucharist.

Church who developed it as a thoroughly Christian term in confrontation with the culture and life situation of their own time.

Mysterion is that of which the content has not been known before but which has been revealed to an in-group or restricted constituency.¹⁷ The English expression 'mystery' refers to a secret which people have tried to uncover but which they have failed to understand and therefore it is not easy to translate *mysterion* as mystery.

In classical Greek, *mysterion* occurs chiefly in plural, denoting certain secret religious ceremonies which were allowed to be witnessed only by the initiated, who were sworn never to disclose their nature.¹⁸ The earliest occurrences of this term in literature is associated with the idea of the "*unfathomable, impenetrable, incomprehensible*".¹⁹ Whatever might be

the original derivation of the Greek word *mysterion*, there is no doubt that it had a technical meaning denoting the rites and observances of those mystery cults which had appeared in the Greek speaking world.

Hugo Rahner summarized the character of the "mystery" of the New Testament revelation as the decision to save the humanity when it had become separated from God by sin.²⁰ This hidden purpose is manifested in Christ, who through his death brings the gift of "life" to the whole humanity. He calls them to partake in his own divine life, of which by an act of personal acceptance, the people take hold in sacrament and in faith, and which attains its ultimate fullness in the beatific vision and complete union with God. The terms 'mystery', 'revelation', 'know-

17 J. P. Louw & E. A. Nida (eds.), *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains*, New York, United Bible Societies, 1988, p. 345.

18 J. A. Simpson & E. S. C. Weiner, *The Oxford English Dictionary*, Vol. 10, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1989, p. 173. For etymological analysis and mystery concept in mystery religions, See D. Sanger, *Antikes Judentum und die Mysterien*, Tubingen, J. C. B. Mohr, 1980; G. Bornkamm, "*Mysterion*" *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. 4, G. Kittel (ed.), G. W. Bromiley (trans & ed.), Grand Rapids WB. Eerdmans, 1967, 802-828.

19 C. C. Caragounis, *The Ephesian Mysterion Meaning and Content*, Lund, CWK Gleerup, 1977, p. 10.

20 See Rom 16:25f.; 1Cor 2:7-10; Col 1:26f.; Eph 1.8-19 and 3:3-12. This means, the redemption that proceeds from the depths of God, is made manifest in Christ and the Church, and returns once more to the depths of God from whence it came. "Mystery" in fact means at one and the same time the hidden quality of God's redeeming act and the revelation of that act; it is revealed in the true message proclaimed by Christ; it remains hidden, in so far as its truth remains hidden, in so far as its truth remains beyond human comprehension and can only be understood by faith. H. Rahner, *Greek Myths and Christian Mystery*, B. Battershaw (trans), London, Burns & Oates, 1963, pp. 28-29.

ledge' and 'perfection' are closely linked together in the New Testament. The concept of mystery is inevitably related to revelation of mystery. Mystery is a great paradox, -a secret which everybody knows.²¹

The Fathers of the Church used the term 'mystery' in a variety of meaning. They consider the salvation history, the salvific events both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament as the mystery. For the Fathers of the Church mystery includes, the life and especially the salvific paschal events of Jesus Christ and the sacraments of the Church which are the celebrations of the salvific mysteries.²²

Mystery was a pagan term which came to be applied to the ritual activities of the Church with specific Christian meaning and distinct from the pagan mysteries. *Mysterion*, as we see in the Scripture and in the writings of the Fathers, has a broader meaning. Mystery that had been hidden is uniquely manifested in the person of Christ. God's wisdom and plan of salvation, Christ's presence in and union with the Church are mysteries. There are other mysteries

such as the mystery of forgiveness of sins, mystery of Christ's death and resurrection, the mystery of the relation of Christ with the Father and the Holy Spirit etc. These mysteries were manifested to the faithful in words and above all in rites and symbols in which they were able to have a glimpse of these mysteries. They never took the symbol as reality rather considered them as revealing the mysteries.

24 Rāzā

Rāz is probably a persian word meaning mystery, type, symbol and 'sacrament'.²³ The Aramaic rāz is almost a technical term in apocalyptic for the 'secrets' of God, in the sense, God's ultimate purpose which were revealed only to a privileged people.²⁴ The word rāz is used mainly in the Book of Daniel and found frequently in Dead Sea Scrolls and in Targums. In the Pesharim the word refers to the mystery concerning the things that are going to come, which were hidden in the prophetic writings, not made known fully to the prophets. In post exilic Jewish literature there is an extensive development of the meaning of the divine

- 21 A. Plummer, *A Commentary on St. Paul's Second Epistle to the Thessalonians*, London, Robert Scott. 1918, p. 47; M.N.A. Bockmuehl, *Revelation and Mystery in Ancient Judaism and Pauline Christianity*, Tübingen, J.C.B. Mohr, 1990.
- 22 For details, see T. Poovathanikunnel, *The Sacraments: The Mystery Revealed, An Enquiry into the Meaning of Mysterion and Realsymbol for a Revelatory Concept of Sacramental Mysteries*, K. U. Leuven, Doctoral Dissertation, 1996, Part I, pp. 112-189.
- 23 Cf. J. Brim, *Dictionarium Syriaco-Latinum*, Soc. Jesu Beryti Phoeniciorum, 1911, p. 630; R.P. Smith (ed.), *Thesaurus Syriacus*, Vol.2, Oxonii, E. Typograheo Clarendoniano, 1901, 3874.
- 24 K. Luke, "The Technical Term Raza", *Christian Orient* 4 (1983) 112-122.

mysteries or secrets concerning a large variety of things which God reveals to the people often in symbolic language.²⁵

Rāzā in Ephrem the Syrian means symbol,²⁶ mystery,²⁷ continuation of the Old Testament and the New Testament.²⁸ It is also used in a general way.²⁹ In Ephrem the term *Rāzā* is a theological term with deep and wide meaning. The hidden power of the symbols provides a cohesive substructure of strands bringing every part of creation together. The fact that they all point to some aspect of divine reality infuses new meaning into both the natural world and the Bible. Every thing and every action has the potential of taking on deeper significance. Ephrem's understanding of symbols thus offers an

essentially sacramental understanding of the world. He frequently used the plural form of the term *rāzā* (symbol) in the sense of 'sacrament'.³⁰ In the Syro-Malabar Church the most solemn eucharistic celebration is called *Rāzā*.

2.5 Sacramentum

Sacramentum is a Latin term introduced into christian theology, which has no exact equivalent in Greek or Syriac. Among other things, it translates the word *mysterion* in the variety of its meanings. Etymologically, the word *sacramentum* comes from the Latin verb *sacrare* and the suffix-*mentum*. It means to make something sacred, to make it of divine right'. As for the suffix-*mentum*, it primarily indicates the means

- 25 L.F. Hartman & A. Di Lella, *The Book of Daniel*, New York, Doubleday & Company, 1978, pp. 132-140.
- 26 *Hymnen de virginitate*, 8.6.3, CSCO 223-224; English translation, K.E. McVey, *Ephrem the syrian: Hymns*, New York, Paulist Press, 1989.
- 27 *Hymnen de virginitate*, 8.8.2.
- 28 *Hymnen de virginitate*, 10.3.3.
- 29 *Hymnen de virginitate*, 8.7.1; 10.5.3,5.
- 30 S.P. Brock, *The Luminous Eye*, Rome, C.I.I.S., 1985, pp. 39-40. In Syrian Fathers, especially in Ephrem, there is a process of sanctification of the world in the life of the Christian by means of the sacraments. Ephrem sets the world alongside the Bible as a co-witness to God, urging humanity to believe in the creator. The method of witness of both of them is essentially by means of symbols and types-veiled pointers to God's hiddenness. They are the means of God's revelation of himself to humanity, a revelation which in one sense culminates in the Incarnation, but in another awaits its final fulfilment until the Second coming - an ambivalence between the temporal and the eschatological is recurrent, especially in early Christian thought. Cf. S.P. Brock, "World and Sacrament in the Writings of the Syrian Fathers", *Sobornost* Series 6/10 (1974) 685-696, pp. 686-687.

to obtain a determined goal.³¹ However, it can also indicate the very action of consecrating something, the agent itself or the very object made sacred. *Sacramentum* is, therefore, the means with which something is consecrated, the consecratory action, the agent who consecrates, and the object made sacred.

Originally *sacramentum* was used as a legal term. *Sacramentum* was a general application in *legis actio*,³² the usual procedure of the Roman legal system applicable to claims of ownership and to claims originating in obligations. At a still earlier period the word *sacramentum* meant an oath by each party involving a penalty to be paid to the offended deity if the oath was found to be false.³³ It was an oath whereby the parties called on heaven to witness to the justice of their respective claims, and that the sacrifices paid for out of the loser's stake were offered in expiation of his perjury.³⁴ Later the word was used to denote the civil suit or process itself. In another phase, *sacramentum* was used to denote the military oath of allegiance, sworn

on attestation by the Roman recruit. Tertullian because of his military and legal background found the suitability of this term instead of Greek *mysterion* and the sacrament in its strict sense. It was an attempt to avoid the pagan cultic view attached to mystery concept on christianity and the christian rituals.

Tertullian used the term *sacramentum* for the Greek *mysterion*. Though the Latin word *mysterium* was closer to the Greek term, *sacramentum* was preferable to many writers because it avoided the danger of confusion between Christian mysteries and Greek cultic mysteries. Thus by the third century, *mysterion* had two different dimensions, among Latin and Greek writers. Among Latin churches there were two terms that were utilised: *sacramentum* for the Christian rituals and *mysterium* for the mysteries of faith. It is clear that at this stage we can not use the English term 'sacrament'. At this period the term meant an ecclesiastical ritual but it could also be any part of the ritual which had a symbolic significance, and all what was meant by *mysterium*.

31 Cf. A. Hamman, "Sacramentum", *Encyclopedia of the Early Church*, A. Di Berardino (ed.), A. Walford (trans), Vol.2, Cambridge, James Clarke & Co., 1992, p. 751.

32 *Legis actio* was a solemn procedure of rigidly formal character, wherein the plaintiff and the defendant had to assert their rights in oral forms prescribed by law or custom. Cf. A. Berger & B. Nicolas, "Law and Procedure, Roman", *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, N.G.L. Hammond & H.H. Scullard (eds.), Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1976, 583-590.

33 P.F. Girard, *Manuel élémentaire de Droit Romain*, Paris, Librairie Arthur Rousseau, 1929, p. 1047.

34 De Zulueta, *The Institutes of Gaius*, Part II, pp. 235-236.

3 The Sacraments: Revelatory Events

The Christian mystery is the symbolic revelation of the hidden salvific reality: containing paradoxes, hidden but revealed, already and not-yet or eschatological, historical and trans-historical, immanent but transcendent, concrete and spiritual or divine, covering past present and future. Christian sacraments are part of Christian mysteries. Hence we define sacramental mysteries as the revelatory events of the ineffable and eschatological salvific mysteries realized in Jesus Christ, revealed in symbols and experienced in the ecclesial celebration, leading the celebrants to a personal relationship with God in Christ and with the Holy Spirit.

4 The Sacraments: Revelation through Symbols

The revelatory dimension of the sacramental mysteries, is clearly in line with the ordinary understanding of the sacraments as the symbols. A quick survey through the works of different authors on symbols underlines the great role of symbols in the history of revelation and salvation.

It is St. Augustine who defined sacraments as the sacred sign which remains a land mark in the theology of sacramental mysteries. The Scholastic theology based itself on the symbolic character of the sacramental mystery defined by Augustine, but it sometimes reduced them to pure instruments to be used, means of acquiring something else and things to be received.

In the second half of this century we find that Karl Rahner has given a dramatic turn in the theology of the symbol and sacramentology. Rahner explained the mystery of Trinity, incarnation, the Church and the sacraments through his theology of symbol. He integrated the sacraments in the salvation history of God's self-expression. The sacraments are primarily symbols and Rahner developed his own effective theology of the symbol. He could unite the symbol and symbolized, and open a new dimension of expressiveness of the symbol. In the light of this theology of symbol a new concept of revelatory dimension of the sacramental mysteries comes forth. Rahner's approach to the symbol starts from ordinary life situation of human words to word-events and then giving way to primordial words gives an anthropological dimension of the symbol.

Rahner's concept of *Realsymbol* is a metaphysical explanation of symbols. He takes serious account of existing definitions of symbol, and distinguishes among them two levels of meaning: primary and secondary. There is no contradiction, Rahner insists, between our everyday use of 'symbol' and his 'metaphysical explanation'. Lambert Leijssen notices that Rahner's theology of symbol embodies the whole direction of his theology.

In Rahner's approach, each being is symbolic by its very existence. He defined symbol as the self-realization through self-expression in the other. It is the reality in which another attains

knowledge of a being. His metaphysical concept has turned the symbol from a stage of mere representation to presentation. Symbol is the manifestation of a reality.

God realizes himself by expressing himself in the Logos and thereby the Logos is the *Realsymbol* of God. The Logos realizes itself by expressing itself in the humanity and hence the humanity of Christ is the *Realsymbol* of the Logos, the self-manifestation of God in the world. The Church is a free creation of the redemptive act of Christ and is a social entity. God can express himself in something which is freely constituted by himself and which has a social structure. Thus the Church becomes the *Realsymbol* of the redemptive act of incarnated Logos. It is the *Realsymbol* of the presence of Jesus Christ, his definitive salvific works in the world and its redemption. In the words of Archbishop Joseph Powathil, it is the concretization of God's universal salvific plan and sacramental continuity of God's great works. The Church realizes itself in the work of salvation. It accomplishes this work in a most radical way to each individual by expressing its redemptive act in sacraments which thereby become the *Realsymbol* of the symbol-function of the Church. The sacraments are symbolic actions, in and through which the Church actualizes itself.

Conclusion

The most important contribution of this theology of symbol in the context of sacramentology is that the symbols are brought up from the status of a mere 'representation' to 'presentation'.

Symbols are not just pointers, but manifestations. 'Pointing' has the meaning of distant reality, while manifestation implies immediacy to the mystery that is being manifested. It is a revelation which brings the reality near to us and not simply a communication which informs us about the reality. *Realsymbol* as Rahner explained in relation to Christ, the Church and the sacraments, is divine, but human at the same time. It is a transcendental reality in the history. Revelation is the self-communication of God to the human being and human salvation is a self-offering of God, in which God communicates himself absolutely to the whole of humankind. The Church and hence also the sacraments, are prominent in historically manifesting these tangible events in the history of salvation.

In the revelatory concept of sacraments the rich biblical and patristic *mysterion* concept of the Eastern sacramentology encounter with Rahner's *Realsymbol* and is enlightened by this western view. Thus, sacraments are the expressions and realizations of salvific mysteries.

Great prospects for the pastoral application will be provided by the review of the classical subjects of the sacramentology such as the question of grace and causality, in the light of revelatory concept. Ecclesiological and pneumatological dimensions which are found deficient in the scholastic sacramentology have become integral part of this presentation.

Dr. Thomas Poovathanikunnel

Book Reviews

Joseph Chalassery: *The Holy Spirit and Chrstian Initiation in the East Syrian Tradition*. Rome; Mar Thoma Yogam (St. Thomas Christian Fellowship), 1995, 250 pp., n. p.

Pauly Maniyattu: *Heaven on Earth: The Theology of Liturgical Spacetime in the East Syrian Qurbana*. Mar Thoma Yogam (St. Thomas Christian Fellowship), 369 pp. n. p.:

We are reviewing here the results of doctoral research done by two priests of the metropolitan eparchy of Changanassery and the eparchy of Kothamangalam respectively, presented to the Pont. Oriental Institute of Rome. Fr. Chalassery's dissertation was directed by Prof. Chorepiscopus Dr. *Patros Yousif*, Chaldean Patriarchal Vicar in Paris. The author made a serious attempt to explore the ancient Syro-oriental [we prefer this term to East Syrian] writings and liturgical texts to elucidate the role and action of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer and through the mysteries of Christian Initiation. His work is, from the Syro-oriental perspective, supplementary to e. g. E. P. Siman, *L'Expérience de l'Esprit par l'Église d'après la tradition syrienne d'Antioche* (=Théologie Historique 15, Paris 1971) and H. Paprocki, *L'Expérience du Saint - Esprit dans l'Église orthodoxe [i. e. byzantine]* (Paris 1990; rev. *The Harp* 4 [1991] 265 f.). After having given an introduction on the Holy Spirit and Christian Initiation in the early East Syrian writings, Chalassery explores the Odes of Solomon, the Syriac Didascalia, the Acts of Thomas, the early Church Fathers (Aphrahat, Ephrem and Narsai.) From this basis he proceeds to the liturgical sources of the Syro - oriental tradition. First he concentrates on the role and action of the Holy Spirit in Baptism and the post-baptismal anointing to continue his research with a long chapter on the Holy Spirit in the Holy Qurbana. In the last chapter, the author wishes to show the way to a genuine liturgical spirituality making clear the effects of the rites of Initiation in the Christian life through the gifts of the Holy Spirit: purification and sanctification, sonship of God, membership of the Church, participation in the Life of Christ, kingship of Christians, priesthood of Christians, prophetic role of Christians, further he explains what are the mysteries of Christian life: participation in Trinitarian life, a life in the Holy Spirit, a life nourished by the Body and Blood of Christ. Thereupon he elucidates the new dimensions of Christian life through the rites of Initiation: the beginning of a new life with Baptism, a life centred on Holy Qurbana (Eucharist), Christian life - a life of perfect love and true faith, a foretaste of the eschatological life, a life of praise and thanksgiving to God for ever. We have tried to resume the contents of this rich book which should find many readers also for that reason

that it brings into focus also the aspect of human co-operation in the process of full realisation of the Trinitarian life initiated in us by the Holy Spirit. Welcome for the student of this book are also the Syriac - English glossary and the rich bibliography.

Dr. Manyattu's book, written as a doctoral thesis under the direction of Prof. Dr. *Robert Taft* SJ is, in its kind, unique, for it is the first study in liturgical theology introducing the concept of liturgical spacetime. Belonging to a Church of Syro-oriental tradition, then author analyses the liturgical spacetime of eucharistic celebration (*Qurbana*) of his Church, taking into consideration what the Syro-oriental Fathers and commentators have to say in this regard. His study illustrates how the concept of spacetime can be applied in liturgical theology emphasising the unity of the symbols in the space and time of liturgy. The book is divided into five chapters. In the first chapter, the author explains the Syriac terms for space and time and then concentrates on the *Liber Graduum* attributed to Mar Simeon bar Sabbâ'e (†4th cent.) the Acts of Judas Thomas, the Didascalia, the Soghita of the Temple of Edessa, and particularly on the early Fathers Aphrahat and Ephrem. Chapter Two considers eucharistic spacetime according to the liturgical commentators Theodore of Mopsuestia, Narsai of Nisibis, Gabriel Qatraya Bar Lipah, the Anonymus's »Expositio officiorum» and the Liber Patrum. In Chapter Three liturgical spacetime is explained on the basis of East Syrian liturgical architecture which takes into consideration the cosmic symbolism of the Syro-oriental Qurbana. Chapter Four deals with the Sacred Time, the persons (priest, deacons, people, heavenly Host), and the sacred actions in the spacetime of the Qurbana. In the fifth chapter, Dr. Maniyattu evaluates the concept of the Syro-oriental spacetime also in the light of the Semitic and Hindu views on sacred spacetime. At last, we would like to draw the attention of the readers to the appendix containing four photos and six illustrations of East Syrian Liturgical architectures. We recommend this rich work which explores at the same time the richness of Syro-oriental eucharistic theology as well as it introduces a theology of liturgical spacetime.

John Madey

Elisabeth Behr-Sigel, *Lev Gillet, «un moine de l'Église d'Orient»: Un libre croyant universaliste, évangélique et mystique* [=L'histoire à vif], Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf. 1993, 637 pp., FF 225,00

The author of this voluminous biography of Fr. Lev Gillet (1893-1980) is the *grande dame* of French Orthodoxy. Born in 1907 at Strasburg and originally from a Protestant background, she joined the Orthodox Church very early obtaining eventually a leading role among the Orthodox theologians living in France. She was teaching at such outstanding schools of theology as St. Sergius institute of Orthodox Theology and the *Institut Catholique de Paris*. She authored i. a. *Le Ministère de*

la femme dans l'Église (1987) and *Le Lieu du coeur, Initiation à la spiritualité de l'Église orthodoxe*. Madame Behr-Sigel knew Fr. Lev. throughout his life and was befriended with him. Thus we may get an authentic information about this French priest-monk whose most famous books were published under the anonymous authorship of >> A Monk of the Eastern Church <<. The author succeeds in presenting the spiritual and ecumenical itinerary of this Catholic Frenchman who became an Orthodox on May 25, 1928, without renouncing his Catholic background, when he was invited by the Russian Orthodox Metropolitan Eulogius to concelebrate the Divine Liturgy [he was not asked to sign any formula nor to make a profession of faith, but was even invited to continue the commemoration of the Ukrainian Catholic Metropolitan, the Servant of God Andrew (Count Sheptytsky [Szeptyckyy]) of L'viv who had ordained him in the Studite Lavra of Univ / Ukraine. "Till the end of his life, Fr. Lev. will venerate Metropolitan Andrew – *his* metropolitan – as a saint" (p. 156]. He himself did not believe that he had left one church to join another one, but understood his ministry as that of a "Catholic priest in full communion with the Orthodox Church of the East". This is why the author calls her friend, >>a pilgrim of unity, witness of the suffering and victorious God, of the love without limits" (p. 616). The book is divided in four parts: the first is dealing with his youth (1893 – 1928), the second with his ministry in Paris (1921-1938), the third is titled "Pilgrim between several worlds, 1938-1970", the fourth is describing his last years (1970-1980). We are also grateful for Fr. Lev's bibliography which is following the four parts of the biography. This book will interest Orthodox in France, the United Kingdom, in the Near East and United States as well as Catholics and Protestants interested in an ecumenical enterprise before the rise of an >>ecumenical era<<. In closing this review, we also would like to draw the reader's attention to the index which follows the bibliography.

John Madey

News

1. Mother Theresa expired

Mother Theresa of Calcutta died on 5 September 1997 at Calcutta. She was 87. The 'mother' as she is known all over the world was the foundress and the superior of the congregation of the Missionaries of Charity since its inception. The mother resigned her post as Superior in March 1997 because of her deteriorating health. The mother who is known as the *living saint* was accepted and respected by all kinds of people – without any distinction of creed, cast, politics, nation etc. Her death is a great loss to the congregation, to India and to the whole world. Leaders, both political and religious, in India and from abroad have condoled the death of the mother.

2. Mar Joseph Irimpen expired

Mar Joseph Irimpen, the first bishop of the diocese of Palakkad of the Syro-Malabar Church died on 23-8-1997. He was 78. After his retirement in December 1994 he was taking rest in the priests' home of the diocese near Malampuzha. The mortal remains of the late bishop Mar Joseph Irimpen was laid to rest in the specially prepared tomb of the cathedral of the diocese. Many bishops and priests concelebrated in the funeral ceremony which was officiated by His Grace Mar Varkey Vithayathil, the Apostolic Administrator of the Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Church.

3. The Assyrian and the Chaldean Catholic Churches reach agreement

The Assyrian Church of the East and the Chaldean Catholic Church which share the same language, liturgy and culture have reached an agreement on several issues that have divided the two Churches for long. The agreement was reached in a joint meeting held in August in Roselle, Illinois. Both Churches have agreed to collaborate in preparing and printing liturgical books, developing catechetical materials and educational and pastoral activities. The meeting was an occasion for the Churches to feel pride in "their common liturgical and theological heritage", "shared ancestry" etc. Agreement has been reached to work together to evaluate differences in practice and to establish a joint commission for unity.

4. Preserve Ancient Traditions

His Holiness Pope John Paul II has asked the Bishops of the Armenian Catholic Church to preserve the ancient tradition of their Church. The Pope was addressing the Synodal assembly of their Church convened in Rome to discuss and finalise the particular Law of their Church. The Pope reminded them that the Particular Law should aim at preserving and fostering the ancient traditions of their Church. Respect for the heritage of one's own Church, a life in tune with its heritage is a must for the growth of the Church. It is necessary to go deep into the Patristic and Liturgical sources to know one's own identity and heritage and learn to live them in the present day situations.

5. Dr. Mammen Chakkalapadickal consecrated auxiliary bishop, Tiruvalla India

Dr. Mammen Chakkalapadickal of the diocese of Tiruvalla of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church in India has been consecrated auxiliary bishop of the same diocese. The ceremony took place on 17 July 1997 at the Cathedral of the diocese. Geevarghese Mar Thimotheos, the bishop of Tiruvalla was the main celebrant. The new bishop has taken the name Thomas Mar Koorillos. The 39 year old bishop was ordained in 1985 and has the degree of Doctorate in Canon Law from Pontifical Oriental Institute, Rome.

6. Dr. Jacob Vellian President of the International Association of Liturgists

Dr. Jacob Vellian, a member of the Syro-Malabar Major Archiepiscopal Church, India has been elected as president of the International Association of the Liturgists. The election was conducted in its 16th gathering held in Turku Aboa, of Finland. The Association started in 1967 consists of scholars in Liturgy from Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran, Orthodox and Jacobite Churches. It is for the first time that an Indian is elected to the post of the president. Dr. Jacob Vellian from the diocese of Kottayam, India is a member of the staff of Paurastya Vidyapitham, Kottayam and a member of the Liturgical Commission of the Syro-Malabar Church. He was teaching also at St Patrick Seminary of San Francisco and Assumption Seminary of San Antonia.

7. 'Missionary Society' of St. Thomas raised to the Major Archiepiscopal Status

The Missionary Society of St Thomas (MST) has been officially raised to the canonical status of "Societies of Apostolic Life" in the Major Archiepiscopal Rite of the Syro-Malabar Archiepiscopal Church of India. The official declaration

was on September 3, 1997 at *Deepti Bhavan*, the Generalate of the Society at Melampara in Palai diocese, Kerala, India. The solemn meeting on that day was presided over by His Grace Mar Varkey Vithayathil, the Apostolic Administrator of the Syro-Malabar Church. The Decree was read out by Rev. Fr. Sebastian Thuruthel, the former Superior General. Mar Joseph Pallikaparampil, the bishop of Palai, spoke on the occasion recollecting with gratitude the works done by late Mar Sebastian Vayalil the founder of the society and the first bishop of Palai. His Grace Mar Joseph Powathil, the Metropolitan Archbishop of Changanacherry and the President of CBCI, expressed his felicitations. Rev. Dr. Sebastian Vadakkal MST the Superior General of the society welcomed the guests and the audience to the meeting.

The Society which started in 1968 with 18 priests have at present 217 priests. It was started to give expression to the missionary dimension of the Church out side Kerala. It is not a religious congregation. The first members were all diocesan priests. The foundation stone of the Generalate was blessed by His Eminence Cardinal Maximillian de Furstenberg on 2 February 1968. At present it houses its minor seminary at Melampara, its major seminary, Ruhahaya, in Ujjain. Its missionary orientation centre, 'Jeevan Jyothi', for the students is in Sreerangapatnam in Karnataka State. The Society has a diocese, Ujjain, and several mission centres in India. The members of the society are working all over India and also in Tanzania.

JUST PUBLISHED!

THE CROWN OF THE YEAR,

VOLUMES ONE AND TWO

The "*Propria*" or changing Prayers and Hymns of the Holy *Qurbana* for the Sundays and Important Feast days of the Liturgical Year according to the East Syriac or Chaldeo-Indian Liturgical Heritage.

VOLUME ONE: Prayers and Hymns for the Weeks of Annunciation, Epiphany and Great Fast of the Temporal cycle, and for the important Feast days from the Sanctoral cycle of the months of December, January, February and March; 1/8 demy; pages 368; price Rs. 85.00 (\$ 8.50).

VOLUME TWO: Prayers and Hymns for the Weeks of Resurrection, Apostles, Summer, Elijah-Sleebea, Moses and Dedication of the Church of the Temporal cycle, and for the Important Feast days from the Sanctoral cycle of the months from April to November; 1/8 demy; pages 420; price Rs. 95.00 (\$ 9.50).

OTHER ENGLISH BOOKS IN PRINT:

1. **MARY MATHA**, the "*Divine Praises*" or the Liturgy of the Hours for the Eight Important Feasts of our Mother Blessed Virgin Mary in the East Syriac or Chaldeo-Indian Liturgical Year.
2. **PASSION WEEK AND RESURRECTION SUNDAY**, the "*Divine Praises*" and other Liturgical Rites of the Holy Week and the Great Sunday of Resurrection according to the East Syriac or Chaldeo-Indian Liturgical Heritage,
3. **THAKSA D - QUDDASA**, the Eucharistic Text of the Syro-Malabar Church - The Order of the Raza (Most Solemn Form) with Notations for celebrating it in Solemn and Simple Forms.

All orders to : **FR. VARGHESE PATHIKULANGARA CMI**
DHARMARAM COLLEGE
BANGALORE 560 029
INDIA